Wii PREVIEWS YOU CAN'T REFUSE

>THE GODFATHER: BLACKHAND EDITION

>ALIEN SYNDROME

COOKING MAMA: COOK OFF

NINTENDO POWER

Super Paper Mario Unfolds on Wii

SEVEN Pokémon Diamond & Pokémon Pearl Revelations

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

Wii THE SIMS

EA FORMS A MORE PERFECT VIDEOGAME

EVERYONE
E
Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii

SONIC TEAM

SEGA
sega.com

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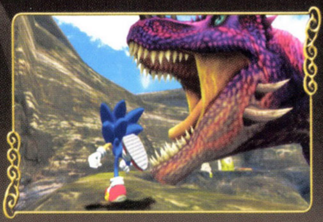
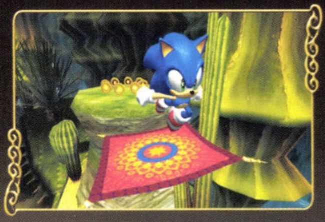
An unknown enemy. An uncharted land.
A Sonic adventure like no other.

SONIC™ and the Secret Rings

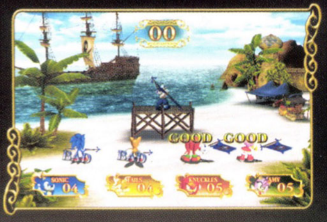
Sonic is racing into a mysterious new land. And you're at the controls. In this all-new adventure, Sonic has to save the world from an evil genie. It'll be one heck of a ride.



100 missions set in a scorching desert, a prehistoric jungle and more.



Fun interactive environments featuring catapults, magic carpets and flying pots.


00
BAD
BAD
GOOD
GOOD
SONIC 04
TAILS 04
KNUCKLES 05
AMY 05

40 party games including Sonic and his friends for up to four players.

February 2007

Wii
SONIC
and the Secret Rings
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Exclusively for the Wii

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NINTENDO POWER

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Square Enix continues its love for the DS with FINAL FANTASY Fables: Chocobo Tales.

Gaze into our eyes . . . you will love MySims. . . .

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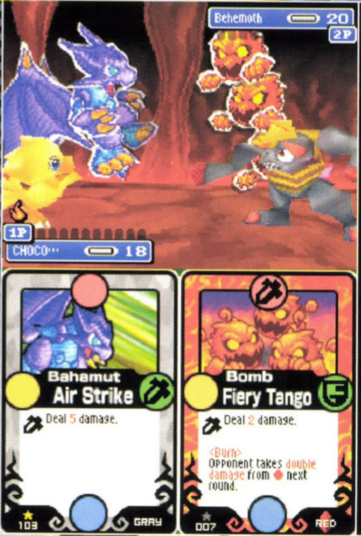
The gaming equivalent of eating sugar straight from the bag.

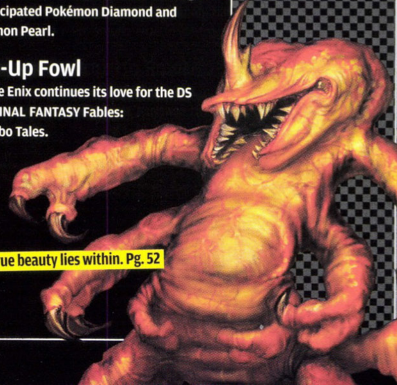
All I wanna do is dance, dance, dance!



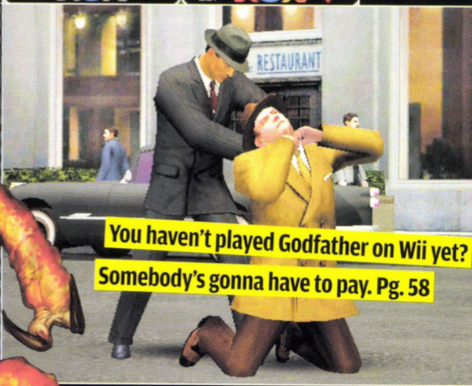
Deal 5 damage.

Deal 2 damage.
<Burn>
Opponent takes double damage from ● next round.

78
Evidently it takes three to Fiery Tango.



We all know that true beauty lies within. Pg. 52



You haven't played Godfather on Wii yet? Somebody's gonna have to pay. Pg. 58

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
Mild Language
Mild Violence
Parital Nudity

TRAUMA CENTER™
UNDER THE KNIFE

NINTENDO DS™

OPERATION SCORE
200
MISS LIMIT
TIME LIMIT
02:53:13

Wh-What? How could something like this happen...?

Now, begin the operation! Work quickly, but stay calm!

42

CAL
TOUCH!

CHART
TIME LIMIT 05 :00 :00
CONDITION
Tumor confirmed at the surface of the stomach. It should be removed before it becomes malignant.
STATUS
Name: Laurie, Noah
H: 179.9cm
W: 141.71lbs

PLAY DOCTOR!

GET THE ORIGINAL HIGH-INTENSITY
SURGICAL SIMULATION FOR THE
NINTENDO DS.
PORTABLE PLAY PUTS THE
SCALPEL AND THE PATIENT
IN YOUR HANDS!

TRAUMA CENTER™
SECOND OPINION

Wii™

VITAL 78
Time limit
230

: Now, I'll need to collect the fragments of
: the broken bones.

FORCEPS

VITAL 4

: Watch the gauge, Doctor! We need
: to get a pulse!

...And we're the ones who are going to help him.

SHE PLAYS TOO!

ONE OF THE HOTTEST
WII TITLES BRINGS THE O.R.
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NEW DOCTORS, NEW TOOLS, AND
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TEEN
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Blood
Mild Language
Mild Violence

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NINTENDO POWER

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MANA NEEDS ANOTHER HERO; MAMA COOKS ON Wii; MORTAL KOMBAT THINKS THE END IS NIGH; TURTLES CLIMB OUT OF THEIR SHELLS; TIGER EARNS HIS STRIPES; BUG ISLAND GETS AWAY; MERCURY MELT-DOWN HEATS UP

PREVIEW

6 MPH
3 WOOD
FULL
285 Yards
Practice

It's nothing but blue skies for the Wii in 2007.

29
Yeah, right. Like Tiger needs to practice.

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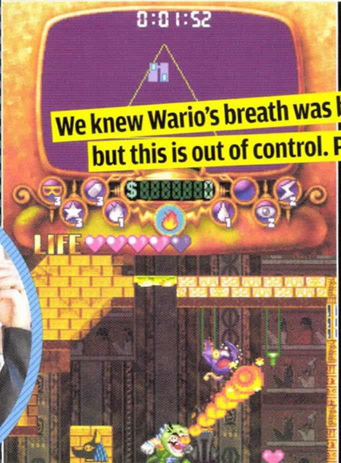
STAGE
FINAL
PERFECT!!
BASIC
02751322
00432

16
DDR on Wii? Perfect!!

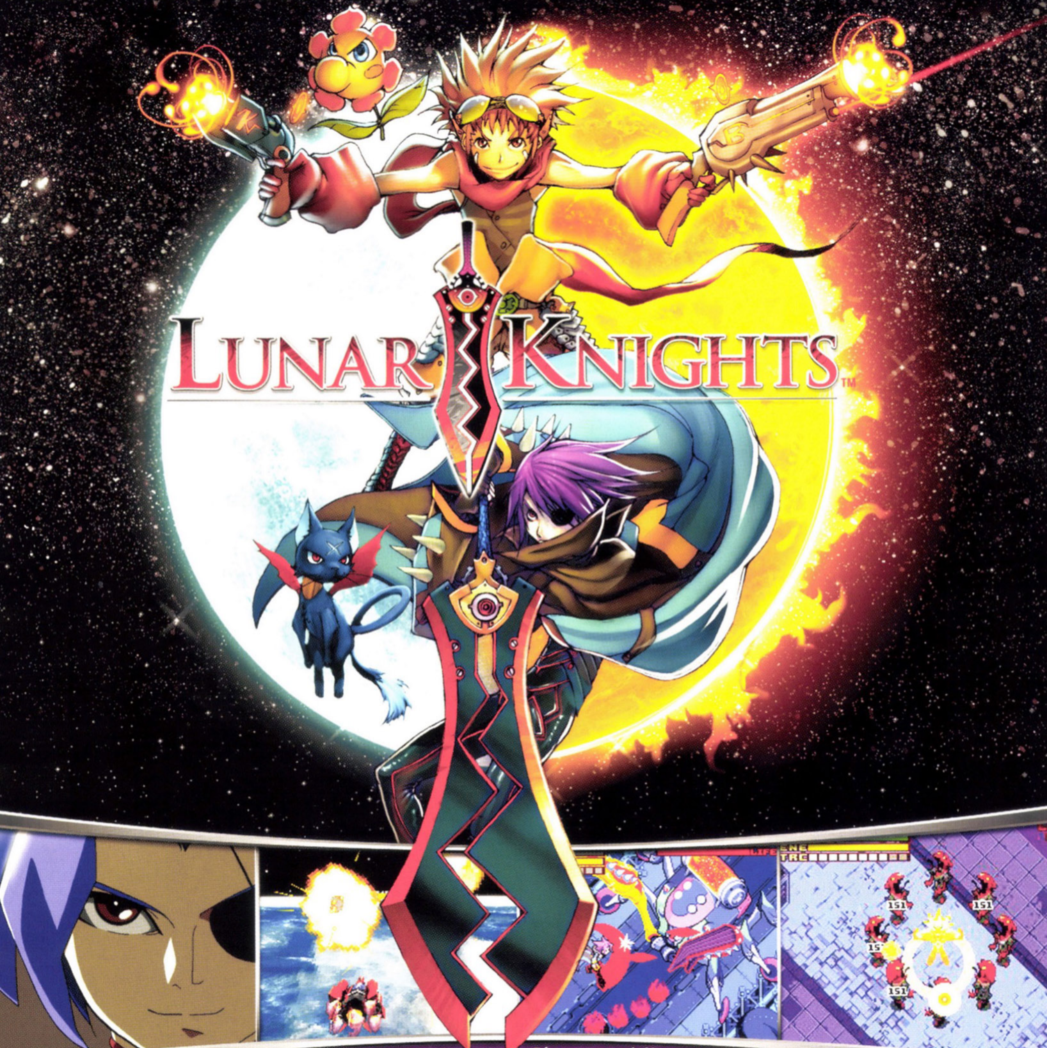
The name's McCloud. Fox McCloud.



We knew Wario's breath was bad, but this is out of control. Pg. 86

This month's Community will have you in stitches. Pg .92

FROM THE CREATORS OF METAL GEAR SOLID.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Play as two different heroes with unique powers and weapons!

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Mild Fantasy Violence
Mild Language
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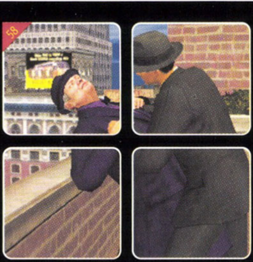
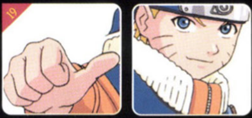
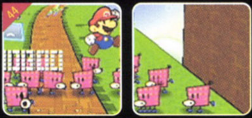
DS = Nintendo DS
GBA = Game Boy Advance
GCN = Nintendo GameCube
SNES = Super Nintendo
VC = Wii Virtual Console
Wii = Wii

* Tentative Title







74
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134/13

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INUYASHA™

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Janis
Inuyasha
Kagome
Miroku
Sango
Shippo

Intuitive Battle System based on the show: Enjoy battling the hordes of monstrous demons with an intuitive command-based control scheme.

Janis
Inuyasha
Kagome
Miroku
Sango
Shippo
1631 文

Meet your favorite characters from the show like Inuyasha, Kagome, or exclusively created characters such as Janis and form a band to travel and battle!

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood
Mild Fantasy Violence
Mild Language
Mild Suggestive Themes

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Pulse

THE Wii LIFE

People who claim video games limit the imagination clearly have never stepped into the world of The Sims. The Sim franchise, beginning with SimCity (the SNES version of which is now available on Virtual Console), has offered gamers a chance to bring characters and entire worlds to life. So this month's cover story revealing in-depth details about EA's radical new direction for The Sims on Wii and DS is particularly exciting news. NP Senior Editor George Sinfield visited EA's development studio to receive the first hands-on demonstration and details about My Sims, giving our readers another worldwide exclusive on a major upcoming title. The scope of creative activities in My Sims is unprecedented, but Wii players who have been exercising their creativity using the Mii editor will likely welcome the variety. Incidentally, for those who want to get the most out of the Mii Channel, this month's You & Mii feature provides professional pointers on creating great Miis.

Of course, creativity in gaming can take many forms as you'll see in our April Wii previews of The Godfather: Blackhand Edition, Alien Syndrome, Super Paper Mario, Tiger Woods PGA Tour '07, and Mortal Kombat: Armageddon; each title really puts a new spin on a classic genre or franchise. We'll also help you plan blazing routes through the toughest stages of Sonic and the Secret Rings, and we'll explore two amazing fantasy worlds coming to DS in our previews of Pokémon Diamond, Pokémon Pearl, and FINAL FANTASY Fables Chocobo Tales. It may be the April issue, but we're not fooling around.

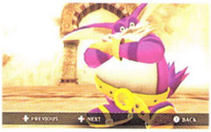
Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

FAT CATS

I was reading the newest issue of Nintendo Power [Volume 213], and I saw in the preview of Sonic and the Secret Rings that you said, "Best of all, Sonic and the Secret Rings is completely devoid of dim-witted, morbidly obese felines," referring obviously to Big the Cat. How dare you people! Big the Cat rocks!

WheezyD
via the Internet



Fortunately for you, it looks like we spoke too soon. The much-maligned feline crept in while we weren't looking. Unfortunately for you, Big the Cat is still dim-witted and morbidly obese.

WORD UP

I would just like to thank Nintendo for having cool names for stuff in their games! On my last spelling test, two of the words were "adjudicator" and "monocular." I couldn't remember how to spell adjudicator until I remembered the Judicator in Metroid Prime Hunters, and as for monocular (which was a bonus word), I recalled the Oculus in Metroid Prime, and how it had only one eye. It helped me get both the spelling and definition right and I got 16 out of 18! Thanks, Nintendo!

Nancy L.
via the Internet

OR JUST WATCH *SCRUBS*

I find it really funny that in the Trauma Center: Second Opinion instruction booklet it says, "This game is intended for entertainment purposes only and contains no medical advice. Do not attempt any of the operations from this game in real life." It seems that their expectations for youth in America aren't that high. I almost had a heart attack laughing. What do you guys think about the disclaimer?

Nazir K.
via the Internet

It might be a little over-the-top, but think about it this way—would you have wanted your little brother to put on a mask and fire up the defibrillator if you had actually gone into cardiac arrest reading the disclaimer? We didn't think so.

JUST STEAL THE NUNCHUK

I simply love Twilight Princess, but one thing I dislike is that my dad stays up almost every night and plays it, and now he's about to pass me! He always says, "For all the time you play I deserve to play as long." I think he is absolutely wrong. Should I sabotage my Wii or something? I have never seen my dad so obsessed with a video game. Please tell me what I should do! I'm desperate!

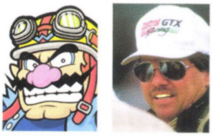
Mark N.
via the Internet

This is obviously one of those tests where your dad wants you to act like a man. Tell him how you feel, then catch up to him when your two-week grounding is over.

REV UP YOUR ENGINES

I was curious; have you heard anything about a drag-racing game for the Wii? I think it would be a really cool game. It could feature professional drivers like John Force. Maybe you could put a bug in someone's ear. You guys have a lot more pull than I do.

Kim B.
via the Internet



We were going to pooh-pooh a game featuring an event that takes only five seconds, but then we remembered WarioWare. Wario even looks a little like John Force—maybe you're onto something!

ROCKING THE MASH-UPS

Why is it that games combining characters from different universes are so popular and successful? I've noticed this on many things related to Nintendo (and on many things that are not), and I am just curious to know why it is so. The Super Smash Bros. games were both big hits, and lots of people are discussing how this or that character would be perfect for Brawl. Kingdom Hearts has also become a revered title, inspiring sequels and spawning interest for many in both the Final Fantasy franchise and in Disney licenses. The Justice League series is still pretty popular, and there are still a lot of Street Fighter fans, so the Marvel vs. Capcom series is still big, too (of course, the actual fun of the game helps with the popularity, as well). My list of findings can go on and on, yet I can't really figure out why people are more likely to be fans of these series that involve such crossovers. What do you guys think?

Docile Chinchou
via the Internet

You've answered your own question: they stay popular because they draw crowds from diverse backgrounds, and many of the big titles have been top-notch games.

TAKE A FLYING LEAP

I'm writing 'cause I have a dire question. I just finished Killer 7 after a year of owning it, and it's one of the best games I've ever played. I've been wondering if a sequel is planned. Also, how could you guys give Twilight Princess a 9.5 out of 10? Twilight Princess is the best Zelda game ever! Whoever reviewed it should be thrown off a cliff.

Hello07
via the Internet

There's no sequel planned for Killer 7, but director Suda 51's next project, No More Heroes, looks to be just as freaky as his last endeavor (see News from Japan, Volume 210, when the game was called Heroes). And while we stand by Chris H.'s 9.5 score for Twilight Princess, we still plan to throw him off a cliff just for kicks.

GET TO THE POINT

You guys should change the method you use for scoring games to increments of .1 instead of .5. This would make for a more accurate game rating. Here's an example of a rating gone wrong: you rated New Super Mario Bros. almost unanimously a 9.5, but you also rated both Twilight Princess games a 9.5. I am about 95% sure that you guys thought TP was better. Your scores would be a lot better if you rated with more specific decimals.

Marcus F.
via the Internet

The fact is, there's just not that much different between a 9.5 and, say, a 9.7. Anyways, we'd rather let the score be a rough guide and let the actual review do most of the talking,

AND EEYORE, TOO

Here is a list of possible games for Playback: 3-D Tetris, Mario's Time Machine, and, last but not least, Winnie the Pooh: Tigger's Honey Hunt.

Patrick I.
via the Internet

Actually, Patrick, Winnie the Pooh: Tigger's Honey Hunt is, in fact, the least. Sorry!

VEGETATIVE STATE

In Art Class, 'cause we're some big fans of the piranha plants, we made these "things". But we now have a dilemma. My mother want it to bury it in his garden. But, our school is full of olds teachers ,that we can call "old-school-NES-fans", who want our plants for the "Teacher's Room". What can we do ? I join some pictures.

William06
via the Internet

Great job on the Piranha Plants, William and friends. Now if you only devoted the same amount of attention to English class. . . .

STAY ON TARGET

Is there any chance that awesome arcade rail-shooter games like House of the Dead and Mazan: Flash of the Blade will come to Wii? The Wii remote would be perfect.

flsomerv
via the Internet

Although we haven't heard anything official, it wouldn't surprise us in the least if a few rail-shooters reached the Wii. As soon as we start hearing about upcoming titles, we'll let you know. For now, look forward to Touch the Dead, a rail-shooter for DS.

A LITTLE LATE TO THE PARTY

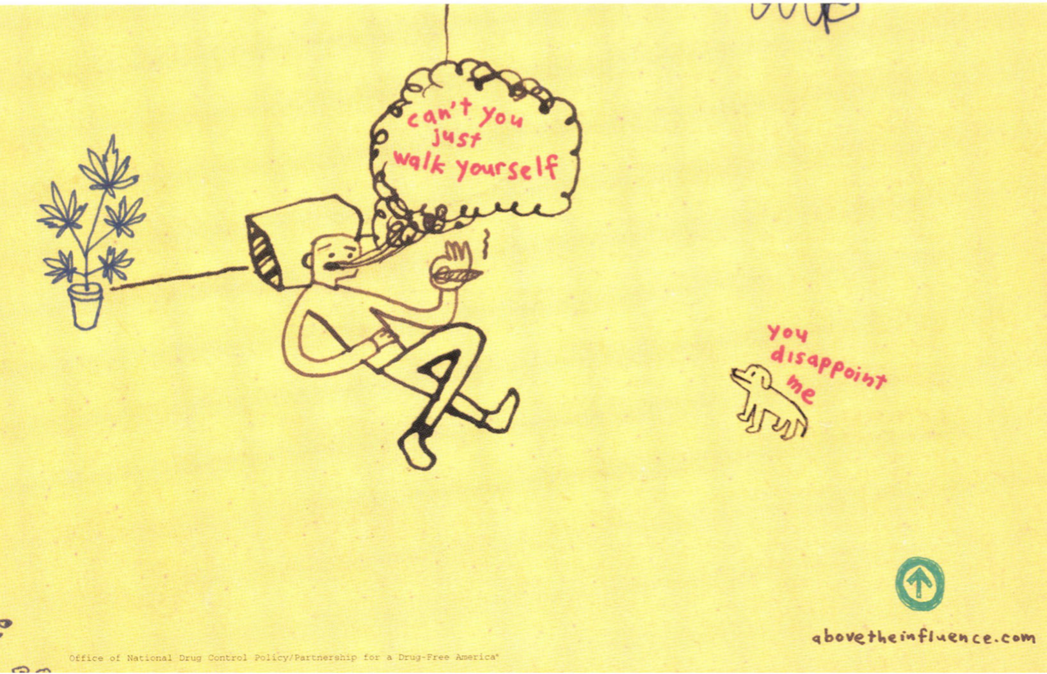
I was recently looking on a website and I saw an interesting photo of a Nintendo DS game. It looked as if it was a Balloon Fight featuring Tingle! I think it may be released with Freshly Picked Tingle's Rose-Colored Rupee Land. If you get any info on this, please put it in the News section.

Ashli
via the Internet

The screen shots you saw are from Tingle's Rupee Land, not another title. The game's fate in North America, like Tingle's balloon, is up in the air.

THE JOKE'S ON YOU

After every slightly insulting joke you print, you follow with, "we kid the (insert butt of joke here)." As a person



Office of National Drug Control Policy/Partnership for a Drug-Free America®

We are a family of four, and we love Wii. We have everything Nintendo, including the GameCube, Game Boy, Nintendo DS, and DS Lite, and as of this past Christmas, Wii. My husband and I have two boys, ages 9 and 11. My 11-year-old is a high-functioning autistic child whose dream is to make video games strictly for Nintendo when he is finished with school. He immediately fell for the Wii when he first heard about it.

Social skills are an area of difficulty for many autistic children. In general, autistic children focus on a "thing"—for example, trains, computers, space shuttles, etc. This "thing" is the main focus of their life. Making video games and Nintendo as a whole has been the "thing" in Anthony's life for at least three years now.

We were a little worried about this obsession and the upcoming new gaming system. On Christmas morning we all were introduced to Wii. The entire family fell in love with it immediately. The best game out of the six we got is Wii Sports. My son is not the least bit athletic, but in the household he reigns supreme in Wii Sports. I cannot tell you how pleased we are with this game system. Not only is he an awesome gamer but it has helped him interact with others on a whole new level. What is great is that he can beat just about all of us, which helps with self-esteem and confidence, as well.

So, I would like to say thank you for an awesome gaming system and thank you for the enjoyment you bring our family through this gaming system.

The Mizelle family
via the Internet

with training in the field of comedy, (yes, there is such a thing as comedy class at my school), I would like to say this statement detracts quite a bit from the humor of the statement. If you did manage to hurt the feelings of some fan/game designer/'80s TV icon, his angry reply would only make the situation funnier. Or you could just try using a different apology, rather than recycling the same one over and over.

Al
via the Internet

You're in comedy school and you write us a letter that's devoid of humor? Some instructor you have! That's a joke; we kid the comedy-school teachers!

THE JOY OF Wii

I would just like to thank you so much for your excellent article on how to throw a Wii Sports party in Volume 212. I used it as a guideline for incorporating Wii Sports into my family's New Year's Eve party. We did as you suggested by pairing up into four pairs and playing Tennis, but we played only six games, each worth one point, and each person serving three games. Bowling went exactly as you wrote, as did Golf. For Baseball, each pair played only one game worth one point. Boxing went just as I had hoped, with a champion emerging—not me, surprisingly! I got beat by my nongamer uncle. Wii Sports got all four of my grandparents asking where to get one, and my nongamer friend asking how much it cost. Nintendo proves itself more and more daily, and I owe you guys for one kickin' article.

Mac W.
via the Internet

WE PUT THE HEART IN KINGDOM HEARTS

Lately, you guys at NP seem to have Kingdom Hearts on the brain! In Volume 211 you compared Meteos: Disney Magic to Kingdom Hearts. In Volume 213 you compared Sonic and the Secret Rings to Kingdom Hearts, and even talked about Setzer's guest appearance in Kingdom Hearts 2. Then you had a moogle from Chain of Memories as the "Name That Screen Shot" feature in Volume 208! This brings me to a question: After a slightly disappointing Chain of Memories, will we loyal Nintendo fans see another Kingdom Hearts?

Ilovestripes
via the Internet

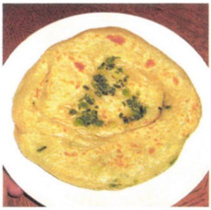
You're right, we love us some Kingdom Hearts, but it's just about the only Square Enix franchise we haven't heard news about recently. Sorry.

YOU TRY IT FIRST

I know this is crazy, but when I was making a green onion pancake, this crazy idea crossed my mind. Since I'm using green onions, and the Triforce is sometimes pictured as green, umm. . . well, the pictures are self-explanatory.

Spencer H.
via the Internet

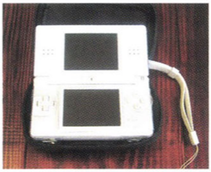
P.S. The pancake was delicious!



JUST IN CASE

First off, the Wii and DS are awesome! I got one of the DS Lite cases that you slip the DS into and play through the plastic sleeve. The case is wonderful for storing games and protecting my system, but it's a hassle to retrieve the stylus every time I reopen the case. My solution came when I received the revised Wiimote wrist straps from Nintendo. After installing the new straps on my Wii remotes I noticed I could slip the small cord through the slot in the DS Lite stylus, tie it off and then tie the strap to the hand strap on the case. The result is a stylus that stores and retrieves easily, never gets lost, and can be used with either hand.

Candecole
via the Internet



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Yoshio Tsuboike
MANAGING EDITOR
Scott Pelland
ART DIRECTOR
Kim Logan
SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR
George Sinfield
Drew Williams
SENIOR WRITER
Steve Thomason
STAFF WRITERS
Chris Hoffman
Andy Myers
Christopher Shepperd
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Jeff Bafus
SALES AND MARKETING ASSISTANT MANAGER
Malinda Miller
For advertising inquiries, contact
np.advertising@noa.nintendo.com

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AS A MATTER OF FACT

The Wii has taken over my house! Everyone loves Wii Sports. Bowling is particularly popular. Are any of you guys good at it? Do you have a designated "Best Player" for any sport? What's that person's skill level? I'd like to know that I'm better than someone who works for Nintendo.

Matthew P.
via the Internet

Our designer David Waterworth has tossed a perfect 300 on six occasions, including three in one day. Good luck topping that unbelievable feat!

300
Scorecard

BROKEN LINK

I have a question about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. Were the people that created the player's guide part of the Zelda team or were they just nerds that were hired? I own the GameCube version of the game and I'm almost done beating it, but I think the guide is confusing because it sometimes doesn't tell you where to go or something.

Pedro M.
via the Internet

It is quite apparent that whoever published the Twilight Princess player's guide never played the game! The pictures of the dungeons are opposite of what is on the game disc for Nintendo GameCube. The directions are all wrong—East is West, etc. Over the years, I have seen the quality of the games improve but I'm sorry to see that the guides have not.

JD C.
via the Internet

Good grief, people. Did you happen to notice the giant Wii logo on the cover of the player's guide? At any rate, read the back of the Twilight Princess guide starting on page 168 to find a comprehensive breakdown of the GameCube version.

WELCOME BACK

I congratulate and thank NP for making Drew Williams a permanent member of your crew. Ever since his first hilarious Star Fox Command article, I knew he was special. Drew, you are my favorite writer so far, and I've been reading for seven years!

Gaming King
via the Internet

Drew actually returns to us after a long hiatus abroad. Crack open some of those issues from seven years ago and you'll find his name in the credits.

A *REALLY* LONG HIATUS

In Volume 212 Drew Williams said he was in a Mexican jail when Gunstar Heroes came out. Suddenly Drew's a lot more awesome. I mean, what did he do to land in that situation? And will a book of his experiences soon be released?

Kevin M.
via the Internet

We'll leave his jail experiences between Drew, his therapist, and his book editor.

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT IN A MEXICAN JAIL

Hey, I'm just writing to say I enjoyed your "Better Gaming through Science" article in Volume 213 (whoever wrote it). It was moderately humorous and quite entertaining, not to mention a nice, creative way to show off some good games. Keep up the great work.

Freak
via the Internet

The author in question is Drew (who's getting more than his fair share of Pulse this month, isn't he?). That's why we brought him back—to be moderately humorous and quite entertaining.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

In Volume 213's Diddy Kong Racing article "Grease Monkey," you incorrectly noted that the game supports eight players via Wi-Fi. The actual number is six.

Daniel V.
via the Internet

Also, we stated in the Diddy Kong Racing review in the same issue that there aren't Silver Coin challenges, but indeed there are. They are accessed differently than in the original game, however.

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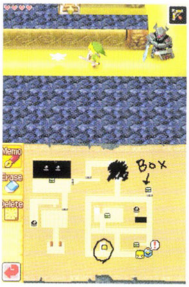
MOST WANTED

As voted by the readers. Go to nintendo.com/mostwanted and let your voice be heard!

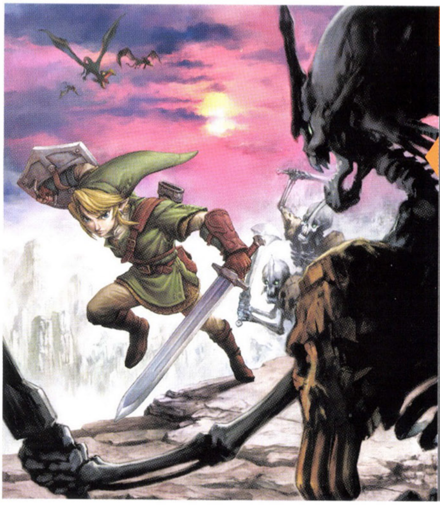
>Wii

1 SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL
2 SUPER MARIO GALAXY
3 METROID PRIME 3: CORRUPTION
4 SUPER PAPER MARIO
5 FIRE EMBLEM



>NINTENDO DS

1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS
2 POKÉMON DIAMOND AND POKÉMON PEARL
3 CUSTOM ROBO ARENA
4 FINAL FANTASY XII: REVENANT WINGS
5 DRAGON QUEST IX



TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO Wii

No shocker here—our friend the wolf-boy still rocks the top of the charts. The question is, What will be the game that knocks it off its perch?

1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS
2 MADDEN NFL 07
3 RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS
4 RED STEEL
5 SUPER MONKEY BALL: BANANA BLITZ
6 MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE
7 CALL OF DUTY 3
8 EXCITE TRUCK
9 TRAUMA CENTER: SECOND OPINION
10 TONY HAWK'S DOWNHILL JAM

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

OK, so we lied last month. You get one more chance to witness the utter dominance the Pokémon games have on Game Boy Advance sales.

1 POKÉMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: RED RESCUE TEAM
2 CARS
3 POKÉMON FIRERED
4 SUPER MARIO WORLD: SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
5 HOT WHEELS STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE
6 POKÉMON LEAFGREEN
7 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT
8 POKÉMON EMERALD
9 SUPER MARIO WORLD: SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
10 STAR WARS: FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

To catch them is my real test; to train them is my cause.

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Hannah Montana, you're no Lizzie McGuire.

1 NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.
2 YOSHI'S ISLAND DS
3 NINTENDOGS: DALMATIAN AND FRIENDS
4 BRAIN AGE: TRAIN YOUR BRAIN IN MINUTES A DAY!
5 MARIO KART DS

6 POKÉMON RANGER
7 POKÉMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: BLUE RESCUE TEAM
8 HANNAH MONTANA
9 BIG BRAIN ACADEMY
10 KIRBY: SQUEAK SQUAD

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

Wii

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Violence

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Wii

UBISOFT

COOL WATERS

DEAD MAN'S HAND

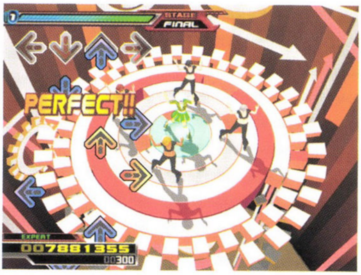
FLY, FLY AWAY

SOOOOO HOT

Dancing Machine

Konami's dancing sensation comes to Wii in the form of Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party, featuring four-player action, four decades of music, enhanced gameplay, and more.

Gamers have been moving their feet to Konami's hit Dance Dance Revolution series for the better part of a decade, and soon they'll be able to experience the fun in a whole new way with Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party, an original DDR title created specifically for Wii. What makes the shindig so darn sweltering? Well, in addition to playing the game the usual way—by stepping on arrows on the included dance pad in sync to the music—you'll get to move the Wii remote and nunchuk rhythmically to get your whole body into the groove. Furthermore, Konami promises an all-new licensed soundtrack that features some of the best dance tunes from the '70s, '80s, '90s, and today, along with cooperative and competitive modes for up to four players. You can also expect numerous difficulty settings and a variety of minigames. Many of Hottest Party's details were unavailable at press time, but Konami has confirmed that the game will be out in the second half of 2007. —Chris H.



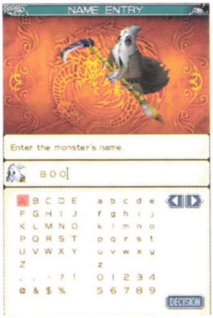
FACTORY-FRESH

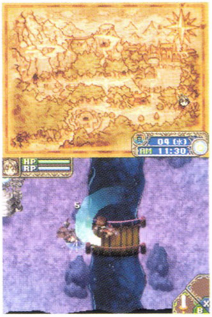
Against the Grain

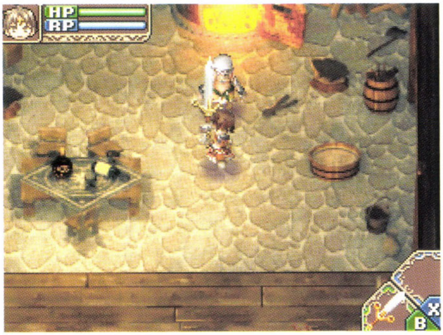
Everyone's favorite farming franchise takes an unexpected turn in Rune Factory for DS.

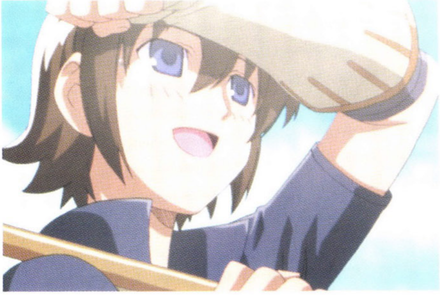
The series that made farming fun hasn't changed a lot in 10 years, and Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon attempts to make up for that. Don't panic, fans—you'll still indulge in many of the familiar activities that made previous Harvest Moon games great, such as growing crops, raising animals, and catching fish. But Rune Factory adds the unforeseen diversion of battling monsters to your daily routine. You'll swap your hoe for a sword as the game completely switches gears to a hack-and-slash, dungeon-exploring adventure. To go along with the new format, Rune Factory has adopted a more mature overall look and story compared to previous Harvest Moon titles. You'll assume the role of a young man who wakes up in an unfamiliar village, suffering from amnesia—your goal is to start a new life and regain your memory piece by piece.

In addition to battling monsters, you can apparently befriend the beasts to aid you on the farm. How exactly farming and fighting will come together is still unclear, but one thing's for sure: Rune Factory is a huge departure for the series. Whether a dose of action will agree with longtime fans remains to be seen—we'll find out when the game sprouts this spring. —Andy M.









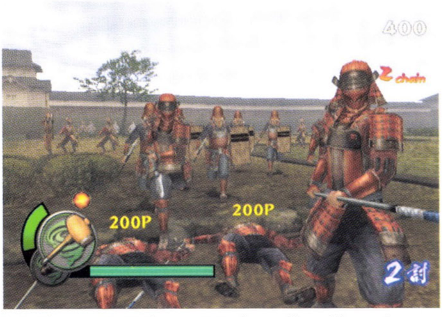
Lush, anime-style cuts-scenes contribute to the grown-up ambience of this Harvest Moon spin-off.

FUN WITH HISTORY

Cut and Run

Koei returns to ancient Japan and puts sword-swinging action at the forefront with Samurai Slash (working title) for Wii.

Known in the '80s and '90s for its text-heavy strategy titles, such as Nobunaga's Ambition and Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Koei has since branched out to pure fighters with its Samurai Warriors series. The first game in the series to reach a Nintendo console takes advantage of the Wii remote's motion control by letting you stab and parry with your choice of eight weapons: four short ones (among them a mallet) and four long ones (such as a classic samurai sword). First-person-perspective fighter Samurai Slash puts you onto the field during Japan's Sengoku period to take on enemy samurais and ninjas, some of whom appear from the shadows or attack from above. A North American release date has not been determined, but samurai-action fans should be prepared for battle at any time. —George S.

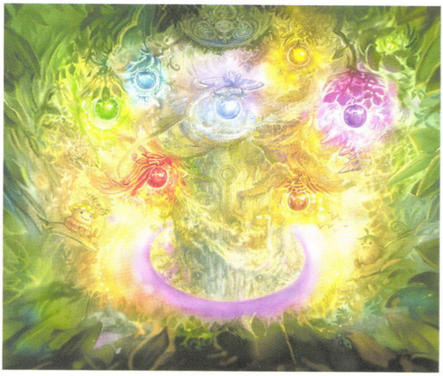


It doesn't seem smart to take on an army of amored foes with a wooden mallet, but you do have the versatile Wii remote on your side.

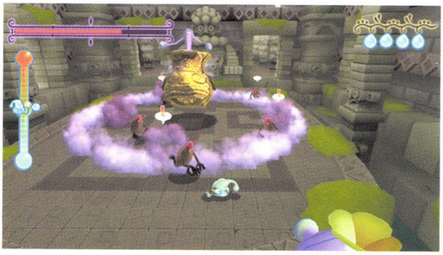
DEW THE RIGHT THING

Little Dripper

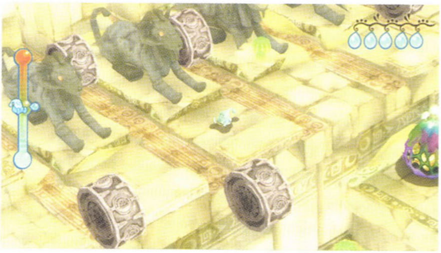
The makers of Elebits venture into uncharted waters yet again with Dewy's Adventure for Wii.



Elebits demonstrated Konami's willingness to try something a bit out of the ordinary on Nintendo's new home console, and that same exploratory spirit is evident in the publisher's latest Wii-exclusive endeavor, Dewy's Adventure (working title). The game stars a small droplet of water tasked with eliminating a terrible scourge that has befallen the forest. You'll tilt and twist the Wii remote to move the diminutive protagonist around his environment, and use gesture-based controls to unleash special elemental powers—Dewy can shoot bolts of lightning, create earthquakes, and more to vanquish foes. Also of note is the thermometer on the left side of the screen; certain situations call for you to figure out ways to heat or cool Dewy in order to transform him into steam or ice. It seems like a really clever concept that should lead to some great puzzle-platforming. In addition, Konami promises that you'll be able to build your own levels using a variety of customization options, then share your creations with friends. Unfortunately, we don't know much else about Dewy's Adventure except that it's scheduled for release later this year. It certainly looks and sounds promising, though, so we'll be sure to keep you updated as we learn more. —Steve T.



We're not sure who Dewy's enemies are, but they must be truly evil if they wish to do harm to such an adorable hero.



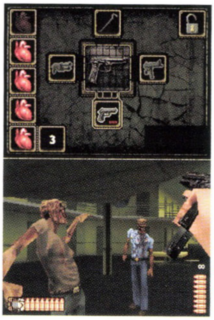
Thanks to games like this, Sonic and the Secret Rings, and Super Paper Mario, the platforming genre is experiencing a renaissance on Wii.

TOUCHING IS GROSS

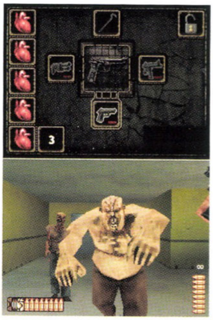
Double Tap the Dead

Touch the Dead brings the ick to Nintendo DS with a new zombie rail shooter. Hold on to your entrails.

Dead 'n' Furious was the working title for Eidos's new light-gun-style rail shooter now known as Touch the Dead. It's hard to say which name we like more—but regardless of what they call it, the game promises to be pure, stupid, zombie-killing fun when it comes out this spring. Players assume the role of a man who wakes up in a prison cell to discover that everyone around him has turned into the walking dead. All he can do is try to fight his way out of the prison, one head shot at a time. As in the classic House of the Dead games, half the fun is dealing with the targets that pop up without warning—only now you need to tap them with a stylus instead of shoot them with a light gun. Think of it as a rhythm game with less music and a lot more shuffling, re-animated dead people.—Drew W.



The peaceful prison atmosphere is shattered by the appearance of homicidal inmates and guards.



Zombies are easy to spot thanks to their terrible fashion sense. No shirt, no shoes, no cerebral cortex.

SIXTY-THREE YEARS IN THE MAKING

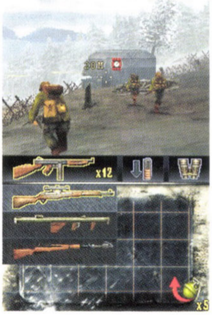
Arms Deal

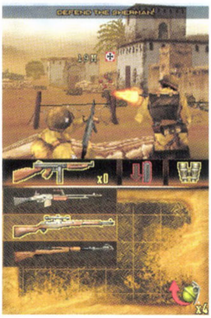
Ubisoft's Brothers in Arms comes to the DS as the first World War II action title for the dual-screen handheld.

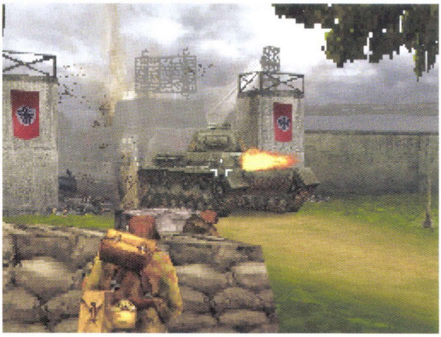
The Medal of Honor and Call of Duty franchises have been the only games in town for World War II simulation on Nintendo consoles for some time. Now upstart Brothers In Arms from Ubisoft is making advances with a three-campaign, 16-mission adventure on the DS. The game begins in North Africa toward the beginning of the US involvement in the war, and continues through the invasion of Normandy in the summer of 1944. The top screen displays a 3-D view of the battlefield that pushes the envelope for graphic quality on the DS, offering detailed locations and explosive effects.

The touch screen gives you the ability to switch weapons on the fly and offers touch-controlled aiming. To throw a grenade, you touch the stylus to a grenade symbol and swipe upward. The farther you swipe, the longer your toss will be. You can also use a bazooka to destroy armored targets and a sniper rifle for spot-on accuracy. Operable vehicles include a jeep and a Sherman tank.

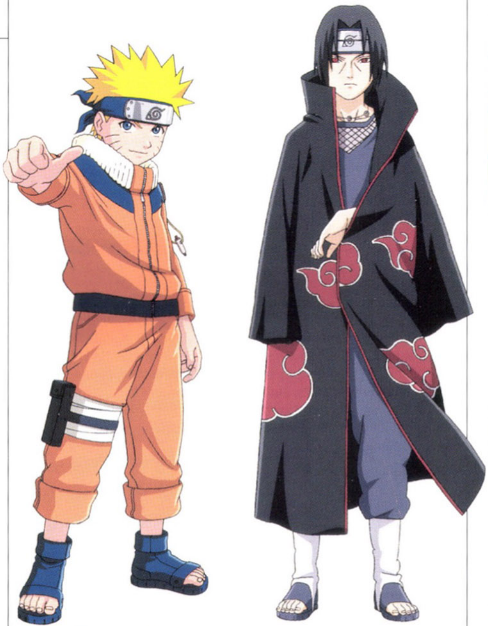
The game will be headed our way this summer. —George S.







When you move your soldier to within close proximity of a short wall, he will crouch for cover automatically. That's a good position from which to lob grenades and neutralize the enemy threat.



GANGSTA-STYLE THUMB JUTSU

Fresh Faces in Clash of 2007

A new installment in the Naruto: Clash of Ninja series silently stalks a fall release date on Wii.

The Clash of Ninja fighting series has already made its mark on the GameCube, and now publisher Tomy and developer Eighting are sharpening their weapons for a new, as-yet-unnamed title on Wii. As you might expect, the Wii remote's special functionality will take center stage in the new game, plus there will be three minigames designed specifically for the Wii. Like other entries in the series, the Wii title will follow the storyline of the popular anime and manga, but the gameplay is all fighting, all the time. The 14 playable characters all have new animations, and each can inflict his signature jutsu on opponents. The big news for the Wii release is the introduction of some additional popular characters from the anime—including Itachi, Sasuke's evil older brother. Fans will understand the implications of the addition, but here's the short version for Naruto newbies: Sasuke—one of the three central characters in the manga—has spent his entire life training for his revenge against Itachi, the ninja who murdered his entire clan. Now players will be able to settle the grudge match to end all grudge matches in a variety of environments and modes. But for now, calm yourself—revenge is a dish best served this fall, when the game comes out. —Drew W.

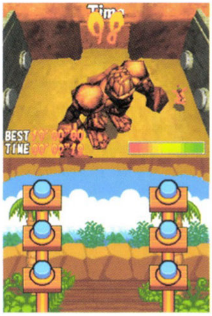
DOUBLE THE FUN

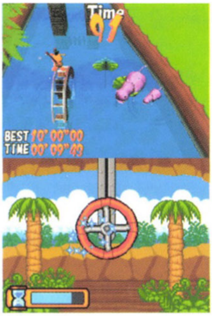
Rabbit Redux

Cult favorites Cookie and Cream return in a brand-new DS adventure courtesy of From Software and Agetec.

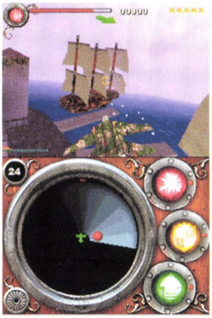
Released way back in 2001 for the PlayStation 2, The Adventures of Cookie & Cream charmed the select few who played it with oodles of personality and a unique blend of puzzle-platforming that required its titular rabbits to work in tandem. The delectably named duo will make a surprising return this spring with a DS sequel entitled simply Cookie & Cream.

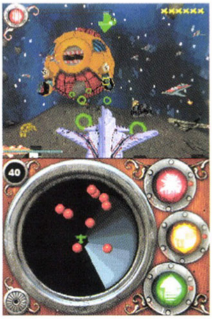
Like its predecessor, the game centers around teamwork. While using the Control Pad to maneuver Cookie on the top screen, you'll perform various touch-screen functions with Cream in an effort to clear Cookie's path or help him get past certain obstacles. Agetec suggests that two people can play cooperatively this way while huddled around a single DS, but the game will also include less-cramped multiplayer options via local wireless and Wi-Fi connections. —Steve T.





SERVING UP AN ACE





Counter Clockwise

Travel to the past with weapons from the future to stop a madman from taking over the world in Konami's DS aerial-combat thriller Time Ace.

Dr. Hugo Clock intends to stop World War I from taking place by traveling to the beginning of the conflict and diffusing the situation in Time Ace. However, bad things happen when Clock's assistant, Klaus Scythe, gets ahold of the doctor's time machine. That's where you step in—you must chase Scythe through history and prevent him from really screwing things up.

The game features 19 levels of aerial shooting action in nine time periods, including the World War II era, the medieval period, and the distant future. You acquire flying machines from one time and use them to dominate your foes in an earlier time. A collection of power-ups enables you to increase the strength of your aircraft and the firepower of your weapons. Racing and dogfighting minigames invite up to four players to compete. —George S.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

As the chill of winter gives way and the flowers start to bloom, an unusually busy release schedule will be vying to keep you indoors. What? Flowers don't typically bloom in March? Hey, this isn't Horticulture Monthly!

2-20

One ring to run really fast.

The release date for Sonic and the Secret Rings has moved up by a couple of weeks, so the game should be in stores by the time you read this. Unfortunately, Big the Morbidly Obese Cat does make an appearance. But at least he doesn't talk.

2-27

The forecast calls for a 100% chance of awesome.

Love snowboarding but hate slamming into trees at 30 miles per hour? Then EA's Wii-exclusive SSX Blur is for you! Your unbroken bones will thank us.

Wii
SSX
BLUR
RP
EA BIG

3-5 to 3-9

Can one convention center possibly contain so much brilliance?

The industry's top minds will convene in San Francisco for the Game Developers Conference, where Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto (pictured below) will give this year's keynote address. Legendary composer Koji Kondo, Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi, and Zelda producer Eiji Aonuma will speak as well.

3-20

Don't call it a comeback.

Three days before their cinematic return, the heroes in a half-shell bring turtle power to Wii, DS, GBA, and GCN (there might be a WonderSwan version, too) in Ubisoft's TMNT. Check out page 26 for our first look at the Wii game.

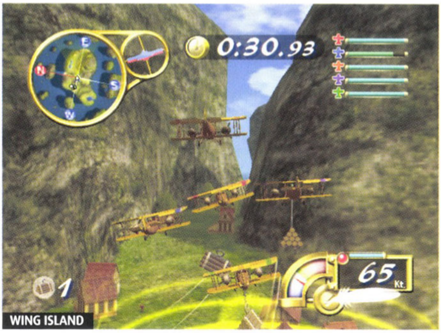
HUDSON SHOCK

Hudson Rocks, Rolls, and Soars

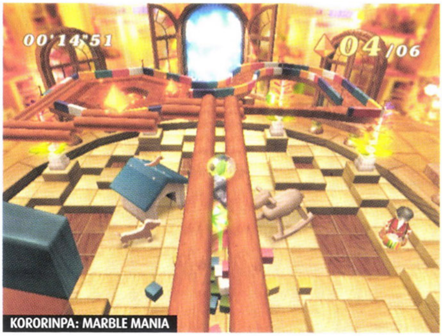
Hudson Soft and Konami announce Wing Island and Kororinpa for Wii, plus Honeycomb Beat for DS.

Hudson Soft has demonstrated its devotion to Nintendo systems with numerous Virtual Console releases as of late, but it's not stopping there—the company recently announced that it will be publishing flight sim Wing Island and puzzle game Kororinpa: Marble Mania for Wii in North America, along with rhythmic puzzler Honeycomb Beat for DS, all three of which will be distributed by Konami.

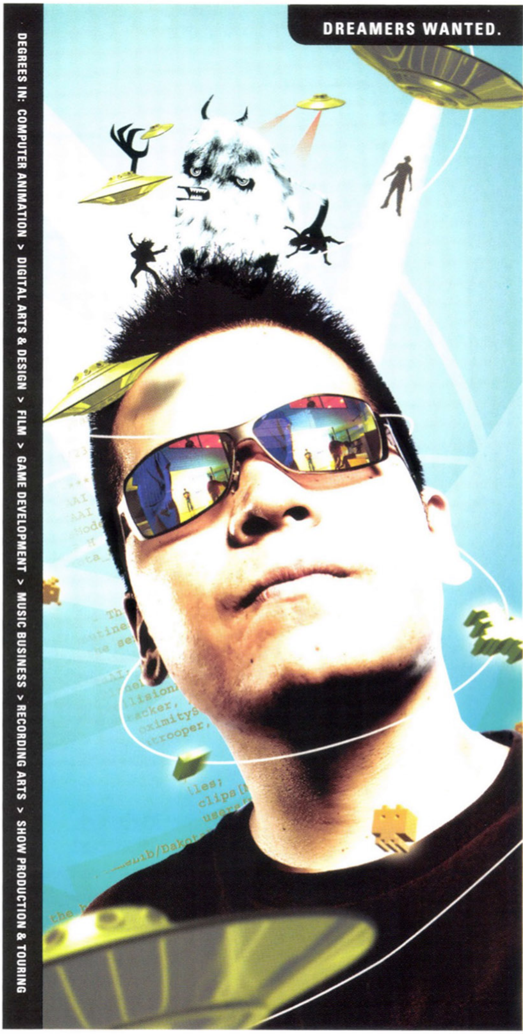
Wing Island is a lighthearted flight sim in which you'll soar through the skies both solo and in formations, using intuitive controls to make deliveries, fight fires, find lost cows, and more. Kororinpa, meanwhile, is a cross between Super Monkey Ball and Marble Madness; you'll use the Wii remote to tilt the screen up to 90 degrees to move your marble through mazes filled with hazards like ice, magnets, and elevators. And in Honeycomb Beat, you'll face more than 200 music-driven puzzles as you tap and move tiles to create and eliminate colored patterns. All three games should be available near the end of March. —Chris H.



WING ISLAND



KORORINPA: MARBLE MANIA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GAME WATCH FORECAST

It's raining games! Hallelujah! This is usually a slow time of year for new game announcements, but this month bucks that trend with a downpour of new additions to the forecast.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release
Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

Wii

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Alien Syndrome	Sega	●●○
Battalion Wars 2	Nintendo	●●○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●○
The Bigs	2K Sports	●○○
Bionicle Heroes	Eidos	●●○
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WW II	Ubisoft	●●○
Blitz: The League	Midway	●●○
Bust-A-Move Bash!	Majesco	●○○
Cooking Mama: Cook Off	Majesco	●○○
Cosmic Family	Ubisoft	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party	Konami	●●○
Dewy's Adventure*	Konami	●●○
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Square Enix	●●○
Driver: Parallel Lines	Ubisoft	●●○
Escape from Bug Island	Eidos	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	●●○
Fire Emblem*	Nintendo	●●○
The Godfather	Electronic Arts	●○○
Harvest Moon Wii*	Natsume	●●○
Heatseeker	Codemasters	●●○
Kororinpa: Marble Mania	Konami	●●○
Legend of the Dragon	American Game Factory	●○○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes*	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Mario Party 8	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Strikers: Charged	Nintendo	●●○
Medal of Honor: Vanguard	Electronic Arts	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	Buena Vista	●●○
Mercury Meltdown Revolution	Ignition	●●○
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption	Nintendo	●●○
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	Midway	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Wii*	D3PA/Tomy	●●○
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●○
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords	Ubisoft	●●○
Project H.A.M.M.E.R.	Nintendo	●●○
Samurai Slash*	Koei	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●○○
Sonic and the Secret Rings	Sega	●●●
SSX Blur	EA Sports	●●○
Super Mario Galaxy	Nintendo	●●○
Super Paper Mario	Nintendo	●●○
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	Nintendo	●●○
Tamagotchi: Party On!	Namco Bandai	●●○
Tiger Woods PGA Tour '07	EA Sports	●○○
TMNT	Ubisoft	●●○
Transformers: The Game	Activision	●○○
Wing Island	Hudson Soft	●●○

NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Asphalt: Urban GT 2	Ubisoft	●●○
Biker Mice from Mars	American Game Factory	●○○
Brothers in Arms DS*	Ubisoft	●●○
Build a Bear	American Game Factory	●○○
Cake Mania	Majesco	●●○
California Games	System 3	●●○
Cameltry	TBA	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chronos Twin	Lexicon	●●○
Code Lyoko	American Game Factory	●○○
Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●○
Custom Robo Arena	Nintendo	●●○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●○
Diner Dash	Eidos	●●○
DK King of Swing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu	Atari	●●○
Dragon Quest IX*	Square Enix	●●○
Drake & Josh	THQ	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Etrian Odyssey	Atlus	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
F-24 Stealth Fighter	Majesco	●●○
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales	Square Enix	●●○
Flipper Critters	Ignition	●●○
Fossil League D.T.C	D3PA	●●●
GoPets	Konami	●●○
Hardcore Pool	UFO Interactive	●●○
Heroes of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
Honeycomb Beat	Hudson Soft	●●○
Impossible Mission	System 3	●●○
Indiana Jones 2007*	LucasArts	●○○
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	Buena Vista	●●●
Konami Classic Series: Arcade Hits	Konami	●●●
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Lost in Blue 2	Konami	●●○
M&M's Break 'Em	Destination	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	Buena Vista	●○○
Mega Man Star Force	Capcom	●●○
Meteos: Disney Magic	Buena Vista	●●●
Monster Rancher*	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
Nanostray 2	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Ninja Council 3	D3PA	●●○
One Piece*	Namco Bandai	●●○
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●●○
Paws & Claws: Pet Vet	THQ	●●○
Pogo Island	EA	●●○
Pokémon Diamond	Nintendo	●●○
Pokémon Pearl	Nintendo	●●○
Pony Friends	Eidos	●●○
Princess Natasha: Student, Secret Agent, Princess	Destination	●●○
Purr Pals	Crave	●●○
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	D3PA	●●○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Quickspot	Namco Bandai	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids	Ubisoft	●●●
Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
The Settlers	Ubisoft	●●○
Shrek Smash and Crash Racing	Activision	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●○○
SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	SNK	●●○
Spectrobes	Buena Vista	●●●
Steel Horizon	Konami	●●●
Theme Park	EA	●●○
Time Ace	Konami	●●○
TMNT	Ubisoft	●●●
Toon-Doku	Majesco	●●○
Touch the Dead	Eidos	●●○
Touchmaster	Midway	●●○
Transformers: The Game	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Undercover: Dual Motives	Anaconda	●○○
Wario: Master of Disguise	Nintendo	●●●
Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship 2007	Konami	●●○
Zendoku	Eidos	●●○
Zoey 101	THQ	●○○

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	Beuna Vista	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
TMNT	Ubisoft	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
ATV: Thunder Ridge Riders	Destination	●●○
Back to Stone	Graffiti Ent.	●●●
Camp Lazlo: Leaky Lake Games	Crave	●●○
Danny Phantom: Urban Jungle	THQ	●●○
Drake & Josh	THQ	●○○
Family Feud	Global Star	●●○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Hardcore Pool	UFO Interactive	●●○
Hot Wheels: All Out	Destination	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco Bandai	●●○
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	American Game Factory	●●○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
Little Einsteins	Buena Vista	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	Buena Vista	●○○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Monster Truck Mayhem	Destination	●●○
Petz Vet	Ubisoft	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●○○
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	Activision	●●○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
TMNT	Ubisoft	●●●
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
VeggieTales: LarryBoy and the Bad Apple	Crave	●●○
W.I.T.C.H.	Buena Vista	●○○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Zoey 101	THQ	●○○

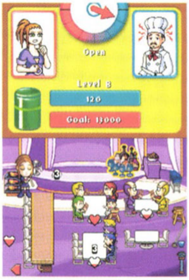
* Tentative title

NEWS BYTES

Get Served

Run your own restaurant in Diner Dash for Nintendo DS.

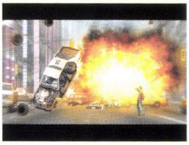
Eidos hopes to satiate players' appetites for food-themed games with the DS release of Diner Dash this spring. Based on the mobile and PC game of the same name, Diner Dash lets you use the touch screen to seat customers, take orders, serve food, clear tables, and more. You'll unlock new restaurants and features as you progress.



Drivers Wanted

Ubisoft keeps its foot on the gas pedal with Driver: Parallel Lines for Wii.

Continuing its flood of support for Nintendo's new console, Ubisoft has announced that Driver: Parallel Lines will race onto Wii this March. The game, which was originally released on the Xbox and PlayStation 2 last year, will boast new Wii-specific controls for both its driving and third-person-action sequences.



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SUPER SMASH BROS. Brawl

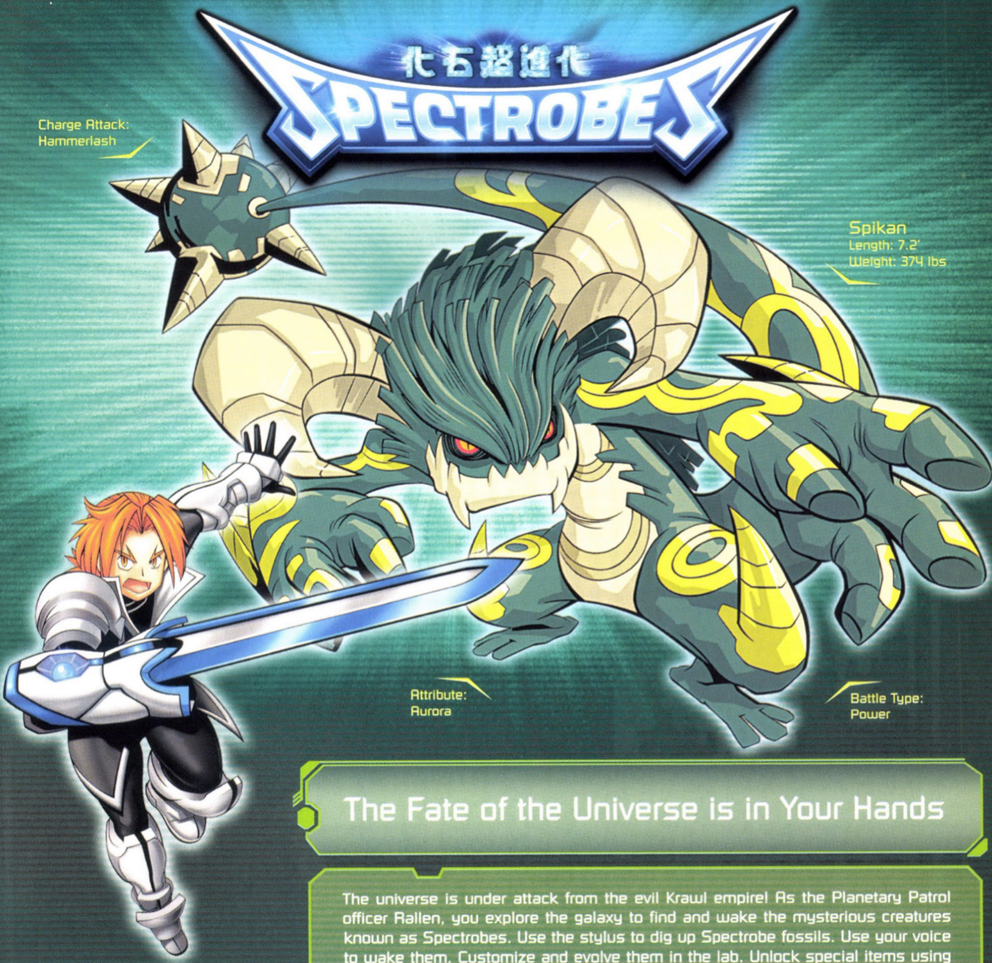
Wii SMASH FILES #09

FOX McCLOUD

FIRST GAME APPEARANCE:
Star Fox - Super NES (1993)

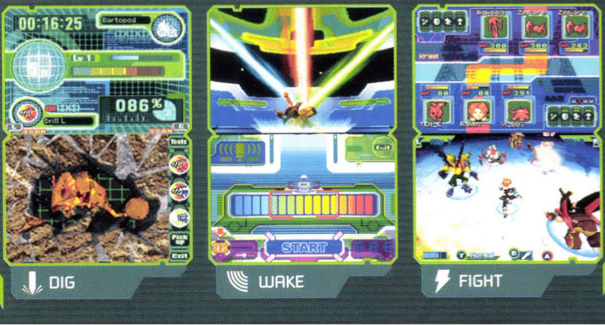
KNOWN FOR:
Piloting skill, marksmanship, animal magnetism

BIOGRAPHY:
Following in the footsteps of his father James, Fox McCloud is an expert pilot and leader of the Star Fox team. Alongside his teammates Slippy Toad, Falco Lombardi, and Peppy Hare, Fox earned a reputation as one of the galaxy's most skilled mercenaries by completing numerous seemingly impossible missions, including thwarting the ambitions of the evil Emperor Andross on several separate occasions. Although Fox's main claim to fame is his talent in the cockpit of his Arwing fighter, his prowess on foot is equally impressive—as evidenced by his mission onto Dinosaur Planet, where he met his love interest, Krystal. Fox's speed and aptitude with a laser rifle make him a ferocious fighter.


化石超進化
SPECTROBES
Charge Attack: Hammerlash
Spikan
Length: 7.2'
Weight: 374 lbs
Attribute: Aurora
Battle Type: Power

The Fate of the Universe is in Your Hands

The universe is under attack from the evil Krawl empire! As the Planetary Patrol officer Rallen, you explore the galaxy to find and wake the mysterious creatures known as Spectrobes. Use the stylus to dig up Spectrobe fossils. Use your voice to wake them. Customize and evolve them in the lab. Unlock special items using the four collectable code input cards included in every game box. Then choose your team, enter the battlefield, command your warriors and defeat the Krawl. The fate of the universe is in your hands. Are you ready?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Exit
START
Exit
DIG
WAKE
FIGHT

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Disney

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy violence

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Call animal control!
Bugs, turtles, and a Tiger
have invaded the Wii.

Cooking Mama: Cook Off Pg. 27
Escape from Bug Island Pg. 30
Heroes of Mana Pg. 26
Mercury Meltdown Revolution Pg. 30
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon Pg. 28
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 Pg. 29
TMNT Pg. 28

Turning Over a New Leaf

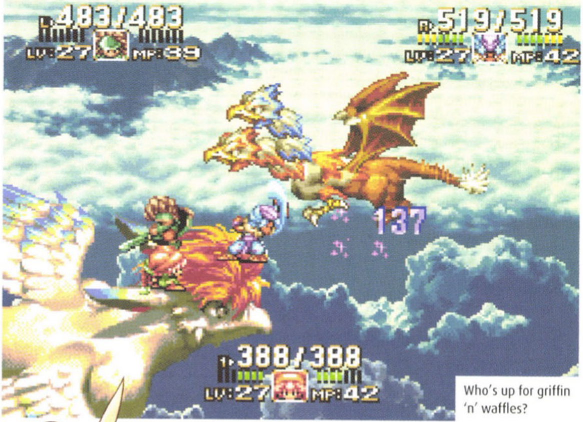
> HEROES OF MANA

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **BROWNIE BROWN** • RELEASE: **SUMMER 2007**

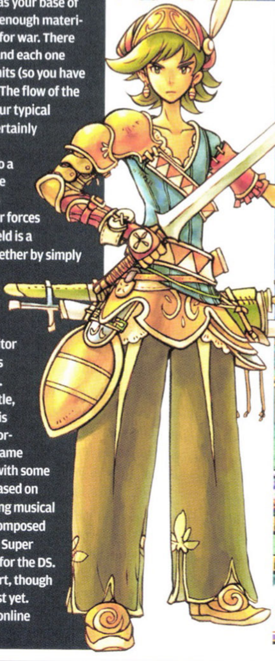
The Mana series has floundered a bit in recent years, but Square Enix and developer Brownie Brown will attempt to reinvigorate the long-running franchise by taking it in a whole new direction. Heroes of Mana eschews the traditional action-role-playing of its predecessors in favor of real-time strategy. The core of your force is a small party of heroes (each of whom can level up and equip items RPG-style), but the rest of your army consists of monsters that you'll summon on the battlefield. You start by creating little mouselike creatures that can gather resources and bring them back to your airship (which serves as your base of operations). Once you've collected enough materials, you can begin producing units for war. There are numerous kinds of resources, and each one allows for the creation of unique units (so you have to decide which ones to prioritize). The flow of the game is pretty similiar to that of your typical RTS, but the distinct Mana flavor certainly helps set it apart.

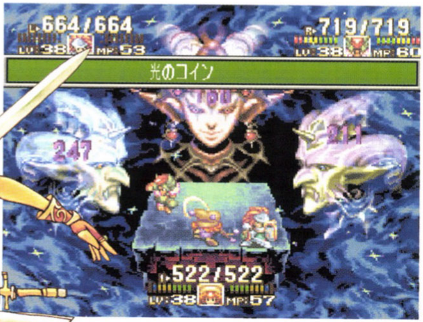
The touch-screen controls are also a huge boon, and one wonders why we haven't seen more DS entries in this genre. Using the stylus to select your forces and move them around the battlefield is a breeze, and you can group units together by simply drawing a circle around them. Additionally, each of your troops has an icon at the bottom of the display that lets you quickly select any off-screen units, as well as monitor their status (the icon's color changes gradually as the unit takes damage).

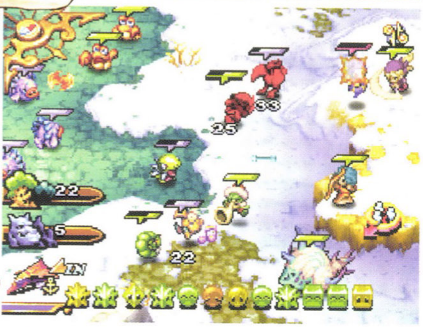
As expected from a Square Enix title, the presentation in Heroes of Mana is top-notch. The game boasts some gorgeous animated cut-scenes, the in-game visuals mix clean 3-D backgrounds with some nice hand-drawn sprite work, and based on what we've heard thus far, the rousing musical score from Yoko Shimomura (who composed the music for Kingdom Hearts II and Super Mario RPG) may set a new standard for the DS. The game will also offer Wi-Fi support, though Square Enix isn't talking specifics just yet. Here's hoping for some full-fledged online warfare. —STEVE T.



Who's up for griffin 'n' waffles?







Gourmet Gaming

>COOKING MAMA: COOK OFF

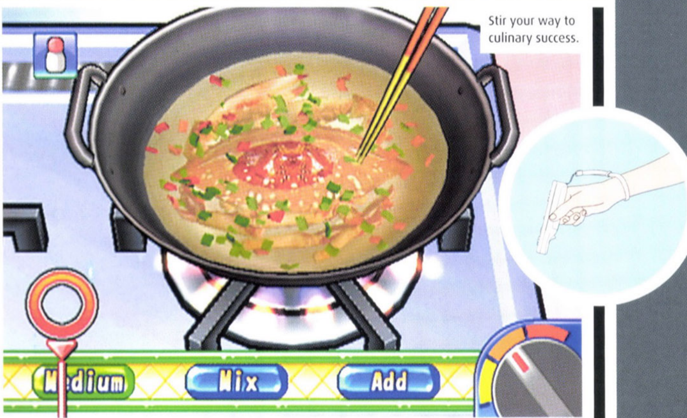
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Majesco**
DEVELOPER: **Office Create** • RELEASE: **Spring 2007**

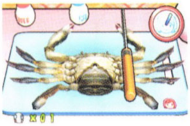
Are you still hungry? We hope so—last year's original Cooking Mama on DS was just the first serving. This spring it's time to dish up the second course in the Wii-exclusive sequel, Cooking Mama: Cook Off. For the most part, Cook Off sticks to the same winning formula as its excellent predecessor—you engage in a variety of food-based minigames, sort of like a hunger-inducing WarioWare—but it spices things up with new recipes, new modes, and, most importantly, completely reinvented controls.

While the first Cooking Mama primarily revolved around variations on pointing, tapping, and dragging, the freedom of the Wii remote opens up the gameplay possibilities with activities that re-create the actual actions you'd perform while cooking (yet keeps the tasks fun). Instead of tapping the screen to chop vegetables, for example, in Cook Off you make an up-and-down chopping motion with the remote, and in place of dragging a switch to adjust temperature, you actually twist your wrist as if you were turning the knob on your stove. Though there is some pointing and clicking (usually when you're adding ingredients to a mix or arranging items on a plate), most of the actions you perform are tailor-made for Wii. You'll hold the remote vertically and make a circular motion to stir stew; you'll tilt it to the side to pour batter; you'll thrust it toward and away from you to simulate shaking a pan of stir-fry; you'll move it up and down to mash tomatoes into sauce; and you'll spin it like a crank to grind meat.

In addition to the new controls, Cook Off offers a much more diverse menu than its precursor. The delicacies this time out include dishes both new and old from 10 countries, such as fish 'n' chips (England), fettuccine (Italy), sausage (Germany), sushi (Japan), chow mein (China), borscht (Russia), paella (Spain), curry (India), brochette (France), and hot dogs and hamburgers (from the good ol' US of A). There are 55 recipes total, and the menu isn't limited to just entrees—desserts like pudding, cream puffs, and cake are also featured.

Although the Let's Cook mode—a free-form mode where you attempt to cook whatever dish you desire, and unlock new recipes with each success—isn't much different from what was offered on DS, Cook Off introduces versus competition into the mix. In the Friends and Food modes, you can play split-screen against either human or CPU opponents to see who's the true master chef, and doing well against computer-controlled "friends" even rewards you with gifts for your virtual kitchen. Cooking Mama: Cook Off has all the ingredients for sleeper success. —Chris H.


Stir your way to culinary success.



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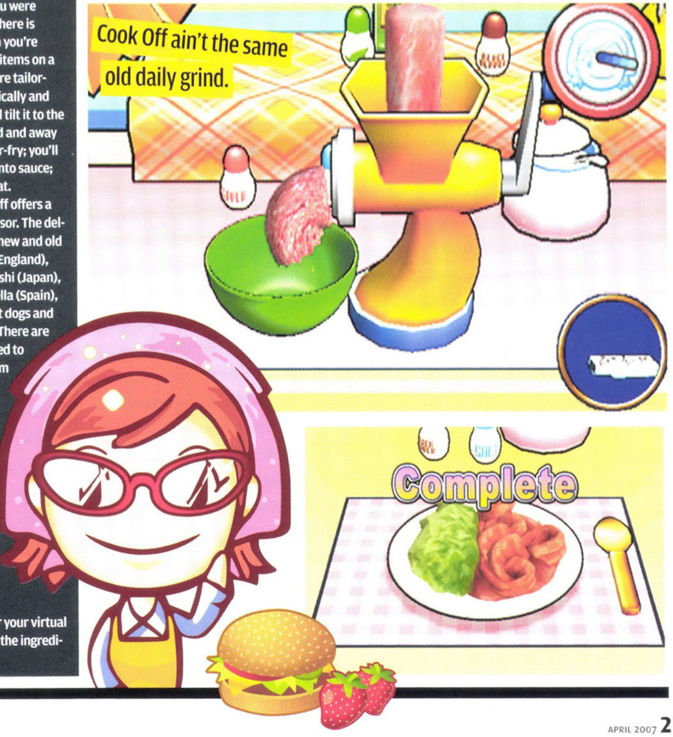
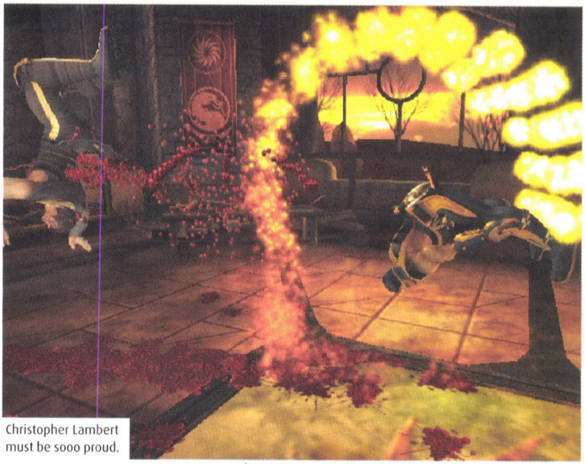

Cook Off ain't the same old daily grind.

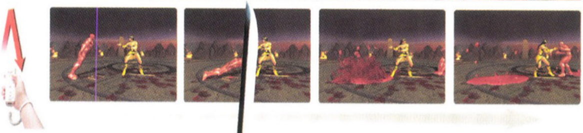
Kombat Rocks

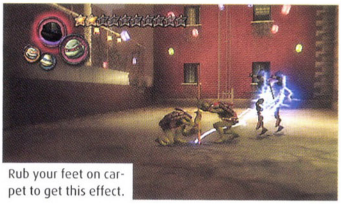
>MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

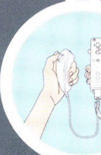
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
DEVELOPER: MIDWAY • RELEASE: APRIL 2007

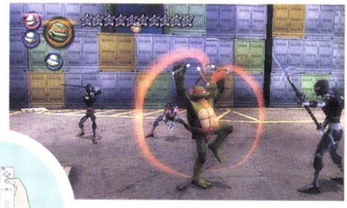
Ever since Armageddon launched for the Xbox and PS2 late last year, the developers of the well-received title have been working on one thing: Wii-remote functionality. And from what we've seen of the game in action, it's been time well spent. Every special move, combo, and fatality has a Wii gesture—to use Scorpion's notorious chain attack, you quickly flick the Wii remote left then right. To perform fatalities, you use a pattern of single strokes to finish off your enemy with conviction. Armageddon's new non-fighting modes utilize the Wii remote, too. For example, in the kart-racing game you can sideswipe your opponents into obstacles by titling the controller.
In addition to the anticipated control scheme, the Wii version will feature a couple of other console exclusives. You'll be able to play in Endurance mode, where you try to survive a string of enemies, and your health doesn't refill. The developers won't deny that there may be an exclusive hidden character or two to add to the 60-plus playable fighters. —CHRIS S.

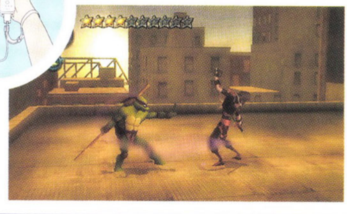

Christopher Lambert must be sooo proud.

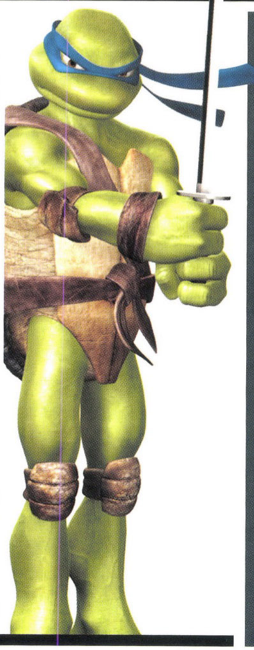



Rub your feet on carpet to get this effect.









Swingin' It in the Sewer

>TMNT

PLATFORM: Wii (ALSO ON GCN, DS, GBA)
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT • DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL
RELEASE: MARCH 2007

We gave you a heaping helping of turtle in last month's preview, but because the Wii version of Ubisoft's multiplatform monster was still inside its shell at press time, we made a special trip back to the sewers to get the goods on motion-controlled martial arts. Like its GameCube brother, TMNT for Wii zips along like Prince of Persia on ten cups of coffee, thanks to the nimble game engine developed for Ubisoft's hit swashbuckling franchise. TMNT dumps PoP's tricky puzzles for stripped-down platforming speed trials—sandwiched, of course, between nasty brawls in the sewers and on the rooftops of NYC (and, occasionally, in the South American jungle). It's during the fights that the Wii's special controls come into play—you'll tilt and swing the Wii remote to deliver beatdowns with your turtle-specific weapon, and use the nunchuk to execute powerful, reptilian kicks. To execute Super Family Attacks (which involve two turtles acting together), you'll need to move the Wii remote and Wii's nunchuk controller in unison. —DREW W.

King of Clubs

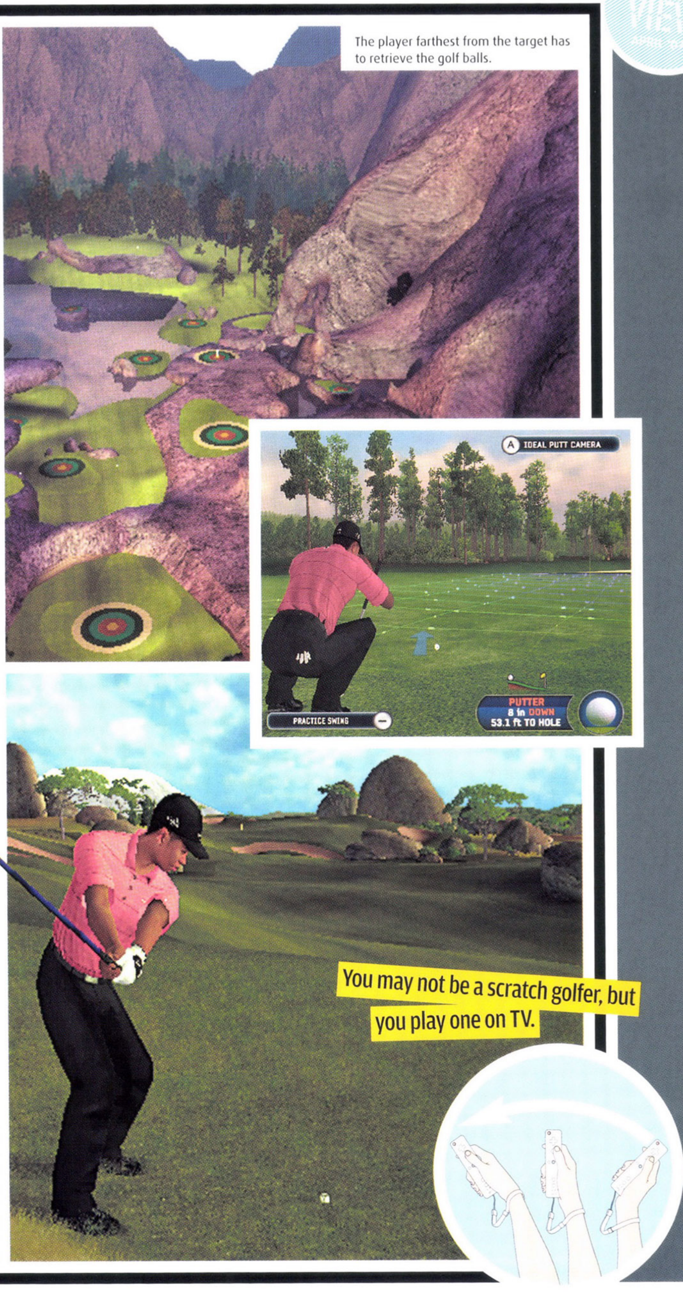
>TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts**
DEVELOPER: **Electronic Arts** • RELEASE: **March 2007**

The realistic swinging motion of Wii Sports Golf mixed with the real-life courses and stars of the Tiger Woods PGA Tour series has intrigued golf-game fans ever since EA announced that the series' 07 iteration would come to Wii. The anticipation is especially high since the Tiger Woods games are known for their intuitive golf-swing-matching controls. Our hands-on demo of the title has confirmed that it will deliver the most fully realized golfing experience of any game to date. To swing you hold the remote in your dominant hand, press the B Button to grip the club, then pull back and swing forward. Your tour pro mimics your motions and sends the ball flying. The main difference between the Wii Sports swing and the PGA Tour swing is that you don't have to stand to play PGA Tour. You begin by holding the Wii remote as you would a television remote: outstretched and parallel to the ground. If you're right-handed, you pull back to your right, keeping the remote level, then swing forward. The speed of the motion and the extent to which you pull back determines the power of the swing. If you twist the remote, you'll trigger a draw or a fade. Before you swing you can take practice cuts and observe a meter to make sure you're using the right amount of power. To push the realism even further, the sound of your club slicing through the air and its impact with the ball play from the remote's built-in speaker. For golfers who would rather use the series' traditional Shot Stick method, nunchuk-style control is also available.

Every new game in the PGA Tour series brings adjustments to the play mechanics. The 07 version makes aiming more realistic by replacing the pinpoint aiming cursor with a circle that can span the fairway and spill over into the rough, depending on the accuracy of your golfer. The game also uses the putting grid system that was employed in the 06 version after years of a simpler but less realistic caddy-tip system.

Tiger Challenge mode lets you take on the game's pro golfers (including addition Annika Sorenstam) on 18 championship courses (among them Aviara in San Diego, The Falls in Las Vegas, and Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz). The mode's events include both traditional golf rounds and arcade-style games that test your golf-swing accuracy. The PGA Tour Season format lets you join the tour for a five-year span and increase your golfer's stats by pulling off great shots rather than purchasing stats with your earnings. Your cash goes to the acquisition of an unprecedented number of licensed clothing items, clubs, and golf balls. Widescreen support at 480p rounds out a polished pro game. —**George S.**



The player farthest from the target has to retrieve the golf balls.

You may not be a scratch golfer, but you play one on TV.

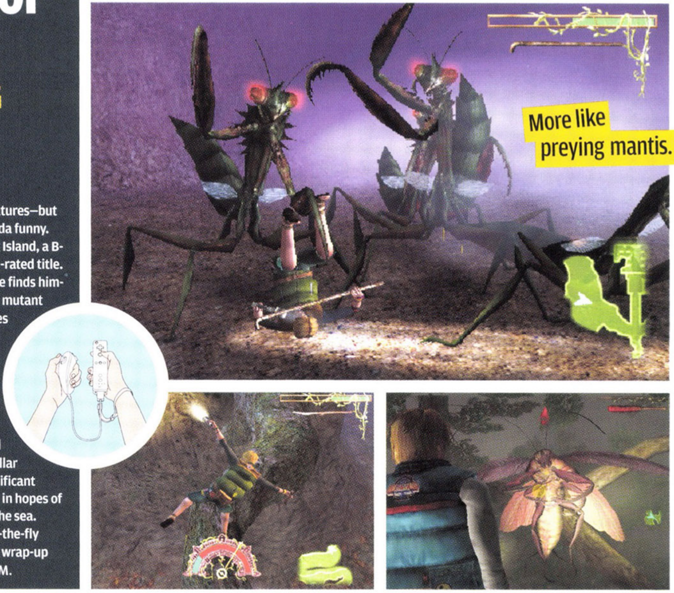
Creatures of the Night

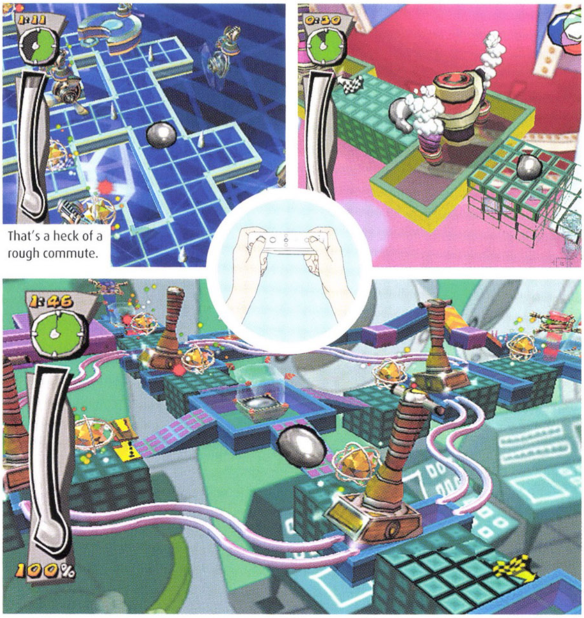
>ESCAPE FROM BUG ISLAND

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Eidos**
DEVELOPER: **Spike** • RELEASE: **Spring 2007**

Bugs are vile, terrifying little creatures—but when they're eight feet tall, they're kinda funny. Such is the premise in Escape from Bug Island, a B-movie-inspired thriller and Wii's first M-rated title. Bug Island follows the story of Ray as he finds himself alone on a mysterious island full of mutant bugs. Ray must fight the creepy-crawlies with sticks, swords, rocks, guns—whatever he can get his hands on. Combat—from aiming guns to swinging swords—is all mapped to the Wii remote, while the nunchuk controls Ray's movement.

Because the Japanese version (called Necro-Nesia) launched to less-than-stellar reviews, publisher Eidos has made significant changes to the North American release in hopes of addressing the criticisms from across the sea. Tweaks include fine-tuned controls, on-the-fly weapon switching, and an arcade-style wrap-up screen at the end of each level. —Andy M.


More like preying mantis.



That's a heck of a rough commute.

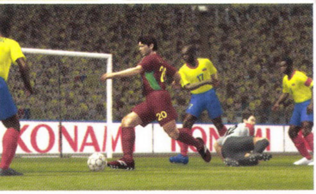
Fluid Movement

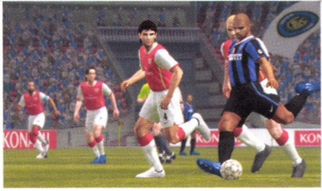
>MERCURY MELTDOWN REVOLUTION

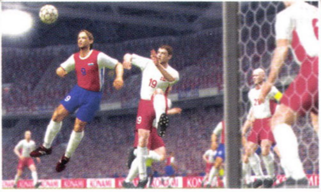
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Ignition Entertainment**
DEVELOPER: **Ignition Banbury** • RELEASE: **April 2007**

You'd think that a blob of mercury wouldn't have a care in the world, but in Mercury Meltdown Revolution, everything's out to stop your ball of molten metal. Color-coded gates block your path; slanted ramps and mechanical contraptions threaten to send you careening off ledges; seesaws and moving platforms upset your balance; magnets propel you against your will; sharp points split your blob in two; and heating and cooling devices affect the mercury's movement and consistency. Reaching the exits in the game's 150-plus mazelike levels is no easy task, especially when you're racing to collect bonus icons and beat the clock. The controls are ideally suited to Wii: as in Super Monkey Ball, you simply tilt the remote in any direction to cause the game environment to respond accordingly. If you tire of challenging the game's eight themed worlds—including the Bio Lab, Electro Lab, Atom Lab, and Aero Lab—you can compete for high scores in five unlockable party games. —Chris H.

Other Games You Play.
This One You Live and Breathe.
Winning Eleven PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2007™


Bring the beautiful game home with smooth moves and animations.


Choose from new leagues and teams including Manchester United.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YOU ARE HERE

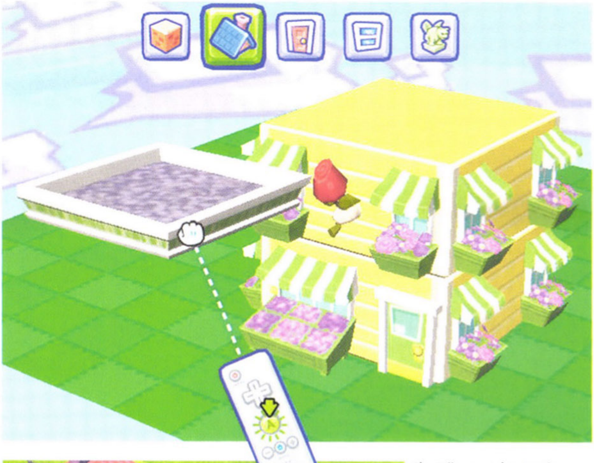
Late this year, a new-look band of Sims will settle down on Wii in a from-the-ground-up customizable environment. Welcome to the exclusive first look at the world of **MySims.** By George Sinfield

Cute. Really Cute.

The MySims team at EA's Redwood Shores, California studio is changing the way players see Will Wright's ground-breaking creation. "When people think about The Sims, they picture grown-up people doing real grown-up things," explains game designer Robin Hunicke. But the inhabitants of MySims are decidedly not grown up or realistic. They're more the stuff of children's-book illustrations crossed with manga. "You look at their cuteness, and it makes you feel that the world is a young place," says Hunicke. "Not that [the characters] are children, but that there's a youthfulness to the experience."

By cultivating that sense of youth and untapped potential in the characters, and following it up with an intuitive interface that uses the nunchuk's Control Stick for direct movement and the remote's pointing feature to drive object building, executive producer Tim LeTourneau feels that the team is developing a game that fits well with Nintendo's philosophies. "If we were making one game for all of the next-gen platforms, it would have a very different look," explains LeTourneau. "We have a lot of reverence for what Nintendo stands for; for their style of games and their approachability. That was how we ended up with these characters."

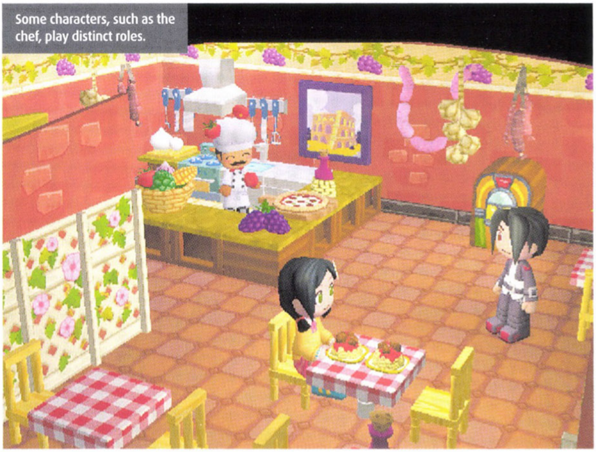
Another reason behind the new character design is the notion of worldwide appeal. Though The Sims has been a phenomenon in North America and Europe, the franchise has yet to make its mark in Japan. What animation director Goopy Rossi calls the "snappy, fun, and cute style" of the characters may be what the franchise needs to cross the Pacific.



The Wii remote lets MySims return to the PC-oriented roots of the Sims franchise. Customization comes easily when you can point, click, and drag.

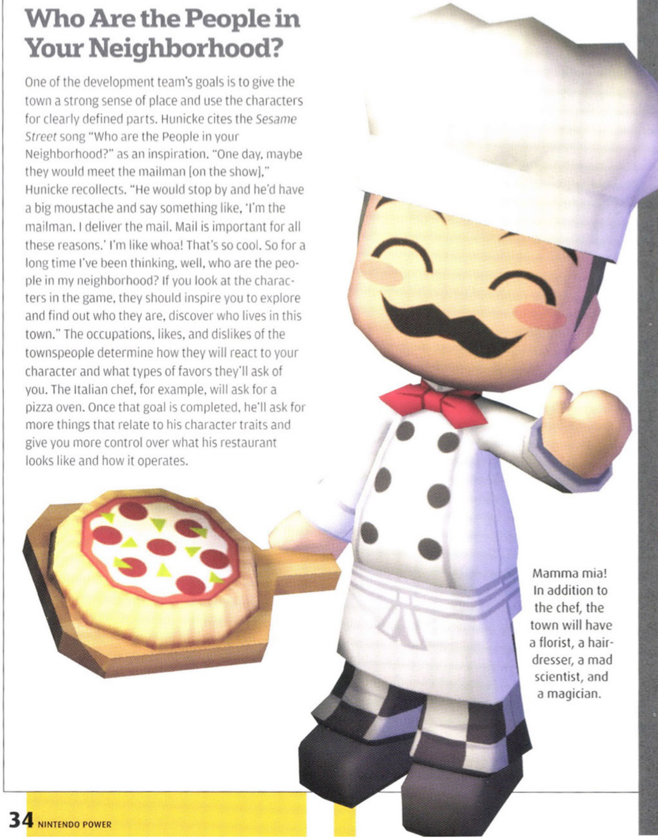
Character designer Emmy Toyonaga says of the team's reaction to the art style: "They just liked one of my doodles and kept telling me to make more."

They look like anime characters and socialize like Sims.


Some characters, such as the chef, play distinct roles.

Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

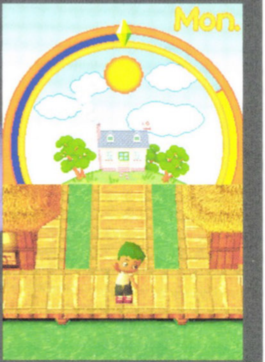
One of the development team's goals is to give the town a strong sense of place and use the characters for clearly defined parts. Hunicke cites the *Sesame Street* song "Who are the People in your Neighborhood?" as an inspiration. "One day, maybe they would meet the mailman [on the show]," Hunicke recollects. "He would stop by and he'd have a big moustache and say something like, 'I'm the mailman. I deliver the mail. Mail is important for all these reasons.' I'm like whoa! That's so cool. So for a long time I've been thinking, well, who are the people in my neighborhood? If you look at the characters in the game, they should inspire you to explore and find out who they are, discover who lives in this town." The occupations, likes, and dislikes of the townspeople determine how they will react to your character and what types of favors they'll ask of you. The Italian chef, for example, will ask for a pizza oven. Once that goal is completed, he'll ask for more things that relate to his character traits and give you more control over what his restaurant looks like and how it operates.


Mamma mia! In addition to the chef, the town will have a florist, a hairdresser, a mad scientist, and a magician.

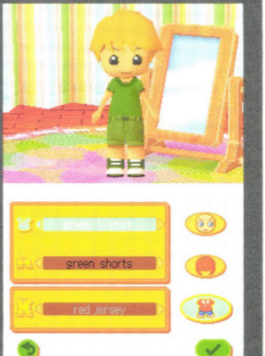
HANDHELD HIGHLIGHTS

Sims on the Road

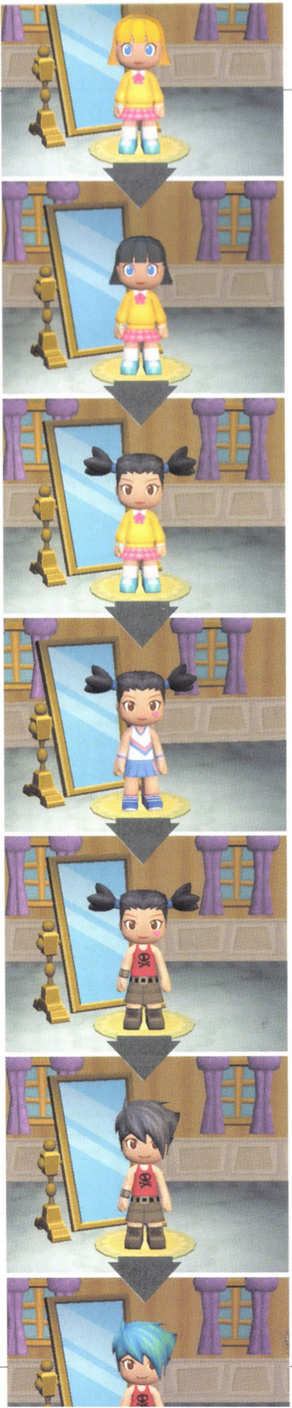
A DS version of MySims is also in the works. Whereas the Wii title takes place in a small town on the rise, the setting for the DS game is a vacation resort that needs your help to bring in visitors. In addition to socializing with other characters and performing tasks that work toward your tourist-attracting goals, you're invited to participate in a collection of minigames that utilize the DS's touch screen and microphone. The one diversion that the team is ready to talk about is a fishing game, and the others will center on similar leisure-time activities. In the main game, the lower screen displays the environment while the upper screen shows the day of the week and time of day. Keep watching Nintendo Power for more details, including news about possible wireless functionality.



You're called on to save a vacation spot in the DS version of MySims.



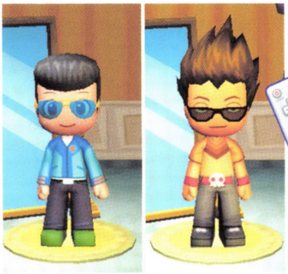
The character-customization screen lets you cycle through a variety of looks.



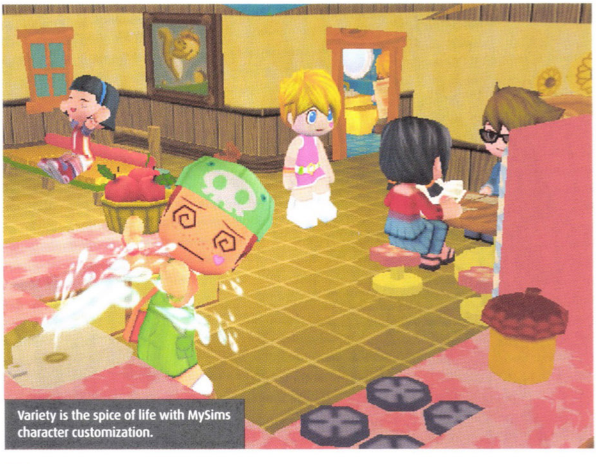
Extreme Makeover

Though townspeople look like you'd expect, considering their vocations, the way that your character looks reflects your personal taste. The character-customization option lets you change your little person's hair, eyes, mouth, clothing, and other distinguishing features by pointing at a part of the body and pushing a button. LeTourneau explains that the team decided to have players cycle through different looks on the character models rather than choose styles from a list because not knowing what the next click will show brings entertaining results. "There's an element of surprise to it. It's this mix-and-match thing that you don't get if you're picking from a catalog. I keep waiting to get bored by just pushing buttons, but I never do." A randomizing button changes all characteristics at once, which triggered elated giggles from the team during a game demo.

Art director Terry Smith confesses that the unpredictability of player tastes wreaks havoc on his artistic sensibilities, but he's glad to offer lots of options. "You are trained to use your eye to make things that work together," says Smith. "But you have to say if the player wants to make it ugly, they can make it ugly. If they want to put paisley and plaid and polka dots together, you have to let them do that."



The developers feel that picking items for the characters to wear is the first step in telling their stories.

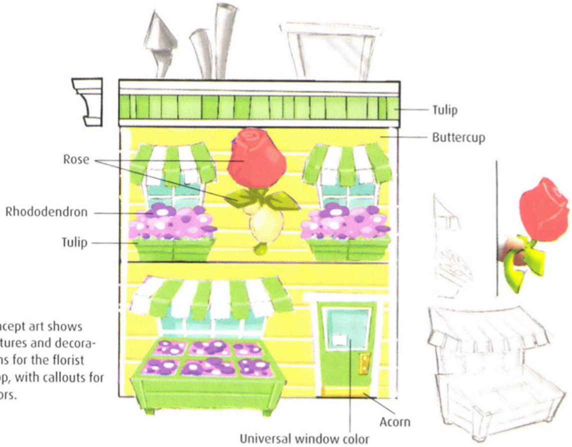


Variety is the spice of life with MySims character customization.

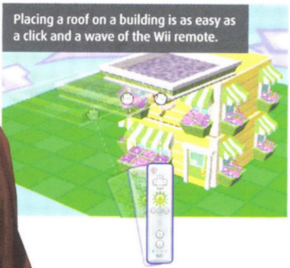
Around the Block

Building places for Sims to live has always been a big part of the series. In MySims, buildings come together faster than ever before thanks to a streamlined process that lets you pick up and place pieces of buildings, starting with blocks of different sizes and shapes. If you want to construct a small two-story building, for example, you move one square block to the middle of a grid, then drop another one on top of it. Point at each block and press B to cycle through textures and colors. Select a roof and place it on top of the structure, then put windows, doors, signs and other features onto snapping points on the walls. The whole process could take just a few seconds. But you can take your time to make it exactly how you want it.

Developing objects and furniture is just as easy as creating buildings. When you're constructing the chef's pizza oven, for instance, you start with an outline of the oven's shape and place blocks to fill it in. Once your creation satisfies the object's basic shape requirements, a feature that identifies the object appears on the surface. In the case of the pizza oven, that feature is the opening into which the chef places his own creations. You can continue to customize the object from there, then put it in its place.


Tulip
Buttercup
Rose
Rhododendron
Tulip
Acorn
Universal window color

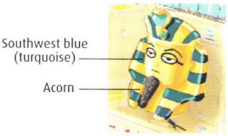
Concept art shows textures and decorations for the florist shop, with callouts for colors.

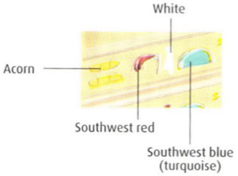


Placing a roof on a building is as easy as a click and a wave of the Wii remote.

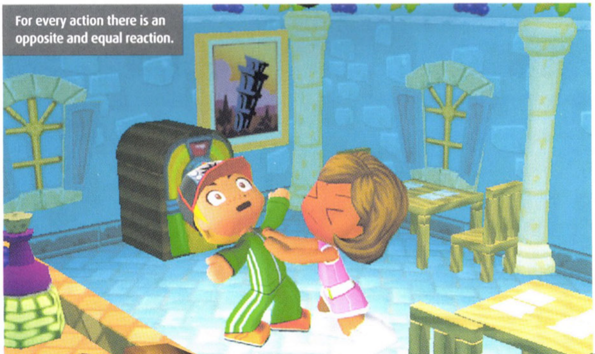
Once you create the exterior of a building, you can go to work on its interior.

The mayor is one of many characters who may have object-building requests.


Southwest blue (turquoise)
Acorn


White
Acorn
Southwest red
Southwest blue (turquoise)

Southwest blue (turquoise)
Southwest sand
Universal window color
Southwest blue (turquoise)



For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction.

Live Your Life

There's a lot of talk among the members of the MySims team about open-ended creation versus linear task-based gameplay: "Creativity is a really scary experience for some people because it is that thing of 'I don't want to do it wrong, I don't want to mess it up,'" says Hunicke.

The game will ease you into the world, set up a story, and give you freedom to create things gradually as events unfold. "The back story is that you're moving back to this town where your grandparents live," explains producer Shannon Copur. "It's kind of run down, so the mayor wants you to help bring it back to a flourishing, happy, vibrant town again." You accomplish your goals by interacting with prospective newcomers and doing favors for them (such as making a mystery cabinet for the town's magician) so they will settle in. The more you get to know the people, the more you'll be able to create things that conform to their interests by using what the team calls "essences" (themed textures and item types) that add personal flair. Characters reward you with more building materials that allow you to stretch your creativity and put your stamp on the town. "I think that the magic is that you make stuff and you use it in the world," says LeTourneau. "And you can point to it and say 'Here's what I did.'"

Wii Channels

News Flash: More 64-Bit Mario

The rubber hits the road on Virtual Console this month as Mario Kart 64 takes its victory lap on the Wii. Plus, check out the fastest ways to get the facts on the News Channel.

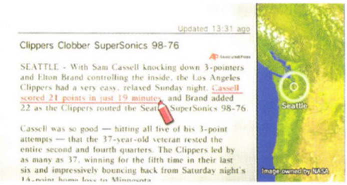
THIS MONTH:

- News
- New Virtual Console Titles
- Tech Tips

24

GET THE SCOOP

If you haven't become a full-on Wii news junkie yet, then you probably aren't making the most of the News Channel's flexible interface. Within the News Channel, you can navigate by clicking function bars at the top and bottom of the screen, but most of the functions are also mapped to the Wii remote. The best way to read a story is to hold the B Button then move the Wii remote in the direction you want to read (you can control the scrolling speed by moving the onscreen "B" icon up and down). A few other handy functions: zoom in and out on the text with the + and - Buttons, move between stories by pressing left or right on the Control Pad, and underline sections of a story by pressing the 1 Button. The last function is a handy tool when you need to point out a factual innaccuracy in a review of the latest Uwe Boll film.



Updated 13:31 ago

Clippers Clobber SuperSonics 98-76

SEATTLE - With Sam Cassell knocking down 3-pointers and Elton Brand controlling the inside, the Los Angeles Clippers had a very easy, relaxed Sunday night. Cassell scored 21 points in just 19 minutes, and Brand added 22 as the Clippers routed the Seat SuperSonics 98-76

Cassell was so good — hitting all five of his 3-point attempts — that the 37-year-old veteran rested the entire second and fourth quarters. The Clippers led by as many as 37, winning for the fifth time in their last six and impressively bouncing back from Saturday night's 14-point home loss to Minnesota

After you select a story, click on the map to access the globe. You can move the globe to select stories by their locations.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

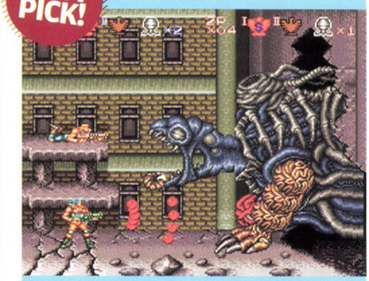
WHAT'S NEW IN RETRO GAMING!

11

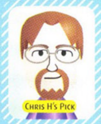
Games

STAFF PICK!

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

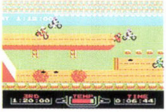


CONTRA III: ALIEN WARS



Platform: Super NES
Publisher: Konami
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1992

Nothing beats the sheer shooting intensity of Konami's Contra series, and Contra III may be the best of the bunch. The game's six stages are a nonstop thrill ride of awesome bosses, wicked power-ups (dual-wielding, baby!), and sweet Mode-7 effects. Be sure to have a friend handy to enjoy the game in two-player mode.

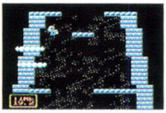


EXCITEBIKE

Platform: NES
Publisher: Nintendo
Genre: Racing
Original Release: 1985

WHAT: The protoracer on the NES challenges you to pick a lane in a hurry, grab big air off jumps, and land with two wheels square.

WHY: The sense of speed and high-flying acrobatics is unmatched for the NES era. Five tracks and a track-building tool add depth.



ICE CLIMBER

Platform: NES
Publisher: Nintendo
Genre: Action
Original Release: 1985

WHAT: While the camera scrolls up one of 32 mountains, you break ice, avoid polar bears, and forge on to solid ground.

WHY: It's not easy, but claiming the prize at the peak gives you a sense of accomplishment that is well worth the journey up the mountain.

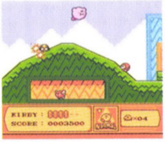
KID ICARUS

STAFF PICK!

PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: PLATFORMER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1987

WHAT: Intelligent Systems's Metroid-ish, vertically scrolling, mythology-themed platformer/shooter starring Pit, now a rising star on the Super Smash Bros. scene.

WHY: Maybe, just maybe, if the Virtual Console release of this game can generate enough downloads, it will convince the powers that be to sign off on a sequel.



KIRBY'S ADVENTURE

PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: ACTION
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1993

WHAT: Kirby's console debut has the transforming hero battling King Dedede and gathering the seven scattered pieces of the Star Rod.

WHY: The character's ability to take on the skills of foes that he consumes is a clever twist on power-up collection.

THE LEGEND OF KAGE

PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: TAITO
GENRE: ACTION
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1987

WHAT: Battle pesky, princess-stealing ninjas amid huge trees in this adaptation of an arcade classic.

WHY: You've seen *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* 253 times, and you love to float around in the treetops—wuxia-style—when you fight bad guys. It's too bad the trees look a lot like green smokestacks.

WII CHANNEL TECH TIPS

Is this Blue Light Special?

There's been some confusion among Wii owners about the blue light that sometimes blinks inside Wii's disc slot. The light only blinks if WiiConnect24 is active—i.e. turned on in your Wii Settings and receiving data from a Wi-Fi router—and has received new data. WiiConnect24 is the system that continually updates received messages and other data (like system update reminders) to your Wii.

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

STAFF PICK!

MARIO KART 64

GEORGE'S PICK

PLATFORM: N64
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
GENRE: RACING
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1997

Having already created the kart-racing genre with Super Mario Kart and inspiring a wave of imitators, the Mario Kart series went 3-D with this N64 classic. For the first time, Mario, Luigi, Peach, and the crew were bombing down hills, zipping around banked curves, and flying off jumps on the game's 20 tracks. Mario Kart 64 also introduced four-player battle mode, Triple Mushrooms, Spiny Shells, and Wario as a racing participant. Ten years after its release, Mario Kart 64 remains a top-tier driving game.

NEW ADVENTURE ISLAND

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: HUDSON SOFT
GENRE: ACTION
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1992

WHAT: Side-scroll across six islands with unrealistically diverse fauna and climates to rescue your new bride, Tina, from evildoers.

WHY: You enjoy hurling fireballs and boomerangs at animals. Plus, the hero, Master Higgins, looks kind of like Michael Moore in a caveman getup.

VIGILANTE

PLATFORM: TURBOGRAFX16
PUBLISHER: IREM SOFT
GENRE: ACTION
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1989

WHAT: Originally an arcade game developed by Irem, Vigilante is a side-scrolling beat-'em-up in the tradition of Kung Fu Master.

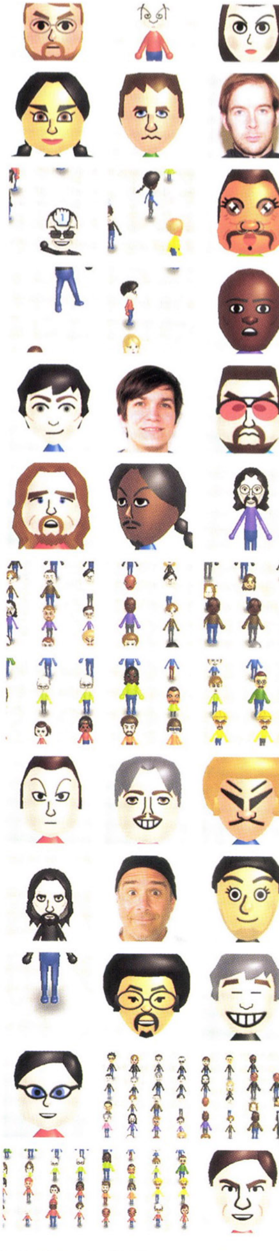
WHY: It's always fun to dispense justice with your feet and fists, and someone's got to teach these girlfriend-kidnapping punks a lesson.

XEVIOUS

PLATFORM: NES
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
GENRE: SHOOTER
ORIGINAL RELEASE: 1990

WHAT: In this vertically scrolling arcade shooter, you'll have to fight foes on two fronts: in the sky and on the ground.

WHY: Don't let Xevious's looks fool you. There's a fun, hard-core shooter beneath its veneer, with depth that belies its age.



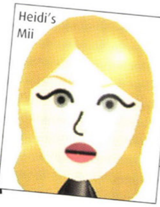
YOU & Mii

Having trouble building a lifelike Mii? Our step-by-step guide will help you get the most out of Nintendo's unique character-creating tool.

By Andy Myers

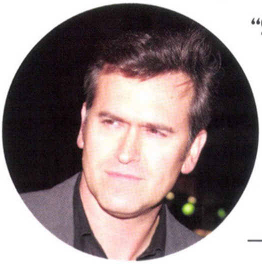
On the surface, making Miis is easy. Once you've spent five minutes with the Mii editor (a feature that comes onboard every Wii system), it won't be long before you're crafting your own loveable little monsters by the horde. In the right hands, though, the Mii editor can also be an incredibly robust tool. While we at the NP offices have spent an unnatural amount of time tinkering around in the Mii Channel, we'll be the first to admit that we're not experts. So we brought in Heidi Alayne—a professional illustrator and longtime Nintendo fan—to provide an artist's perspective on building believable Miis. To demonstrate her techniques, we asked Heidi to create three Miis: one based on a celebrity, one on a video-game character, and another on a regular Joe. Let's see how she does! **(All but the tips in Blue boxes on the following pages are Heidi's words.)**

Heidi Alayne


Heidi's Mii

SUBJECT:

Bruce Campbell

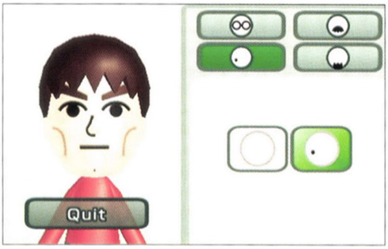


> **"Some people were born to be Miis! Bruce's chin is his most obvious feature, but by paying attention to the little details, I've turned a funny caricature into a sensitive portrait. Well, a sensitive portrait that makes me giggle uncontrollably."**
>
> **—Heidi Alayne**

Known for Evil Dead, Spider-Man 2, Bubba Ho-tep

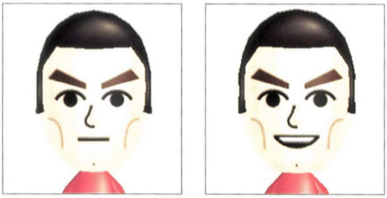
Chin:

"If chins could kill, this chin would give Bruce a serious advantage in Wii Sports Boxing. Or maybe it would just be an easy target. Note the unorthodox use of the beauty mark—I moved it to the center of the chin, then shrank it to add some depth."



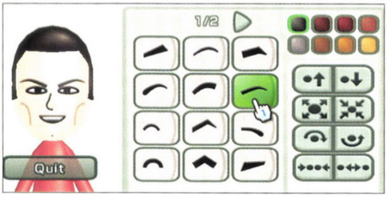
Hair and Mouth:

"I picked out the hair from Bruce's recent Old Spice commercial. Also, if you're a leading man in Hollywood, you've got to have a great set of pearly-whites."



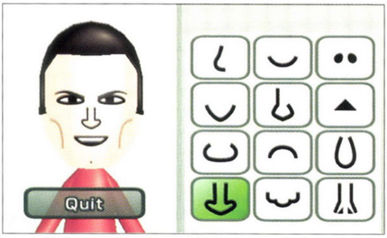
Eyes and Eyebrows:

"When I was studying Bruce's headshot, I noticed that his eyebrows and eyes are weirdly close together. The shape of these eyebrows was good, but I made them smaller and closer together. In general, smaller features make a face look more masculine."



Nose:

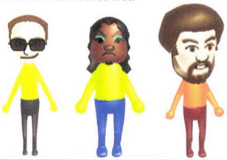
"Bruce's noble nose has a lot going on, but I shrank it a bit so that it wouldn't dominate the face. When you're doing a portrait, whether in charcoal, in oil, or on the Mii Channel, it's important to make sure each element of the face is proportionally accurate."

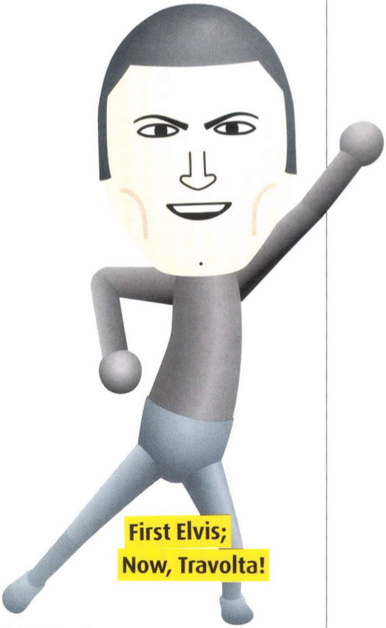


TROUSER POWER

Expand Your Wardrobe

Although you can change the color of your Mii's shirt, you can't directly change the color of his pants. But if you work the system a bit, you'll have trouser options other than black. In your Mii's profile, select him as a favorite to change the color of his pants to a reddish brown. Blue pants are a bit trickier to pull off. To don them, your Mii must travel from one Wii to another via the Internet.





First Elvis; Now, Travolta!

Finishing Touches:

"Finally, I took every feature and raised it a couple of notches. This elongates the chin and makes the jaw seem more square. Even though there are only six basic head shapes, you can drastically change the facial structure by moving all the features up or down together. Sometimes even raising or lowering a single feature can give the face the right nuance, so experiment until it feels just right."

SUBJECT:

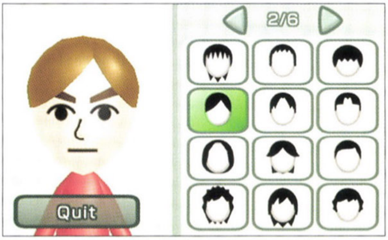
Leon S. Kennedy

> "Sometimes making a good Mii is all about capturing a trademark facial expression. You might not recognize Leon in this cutesy context, but check out that steely glare! So cool, so tough! Leon, you can protect me from blood-thirsty parasite-ridden cult members any day."
>
> —Heidi Alayne

Known for Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil 4

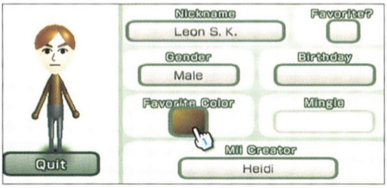
Hair:

"Even though there are 72 different hairstyles to choose from, none of them quite capture Leon's signature look. There were a couple of other styles I considered, but I went with this one because it's neat in the back and has a great side part that comes down over the eye. Hot!"



Clothes:

"Brown Jacket, black pants, and an invisible attaché case for ammo and herbs. (Where does he keep that thing, anyway?)"



Nickname: Leon S. K.

Favorite?

Gender: Male

Birthday

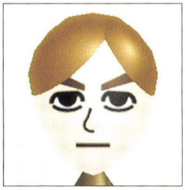
Favorite Color

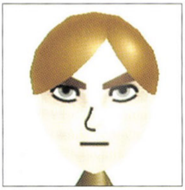
Mingle

Mii Creator: Heidi

Eyes:

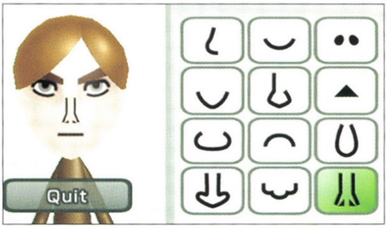
"These eyes look totally dopey at first, but after some heavy-duty rotation they can look alert and intense. I added shadow under the brows for that hunted look."





Nose:

"Leon has a nice straight nose. I suppose that's the advantage of being a digitally rendered character—perfect features are a little bit easier to come by."



SHARING IS CARING

Trade With Friends

Exchanging Miis with friends is a blast, and it's free—but it also requires some setup time. Once your Wii's connected to the Web, follow these steps; your Miis will be traveling the information superhighway in no time.

STEP 1: From the Channels menu, click on the Wii Message Board icon in the lower-right corner.

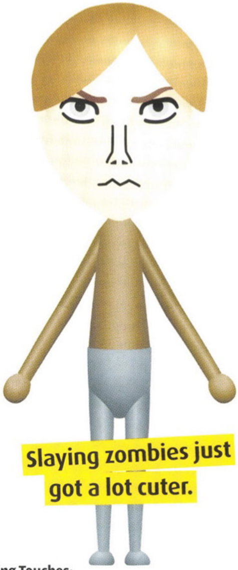
STEP 2: Click the Create Message icon in the lower-left corner.

STEP 3: Select Address Book. (If this is the first time you've used it, your Wii Number will pop up. If not, you must scroll left to find your Wii Number.)

STEP 4: Select Register, choose the Wii option, then enter your friend's Wii Number. (Have your friend do the same with your Wii Number.)

STEP 5: Once you see your friend in your address book, head to the Mii channel.

STEP 6: Select the Wii Friend icon on the right, drop your Mii into the envelope, select your friend as the recipient, and off goes your Mii!



Slaying zombies just got a lot cuter.

Finishing Touches:

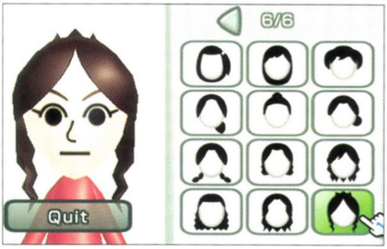
"Here's where it all comes together. The serious brow, the stubborn yet sensitive lips. Is Leon S. Kennedy not the hottest zombie-killer *ever*? Why would anyone want to chainsaw this pretty head off?"

SUBJECT:
Geneva Wall

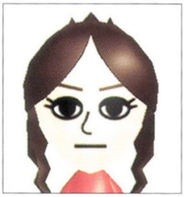
> "The first thing I did when I got my Wii was make my entire family, including my little sister, Geneva. Then I pinched her head with the remote and shook her around while her arms waved helplessly."
>
> —Heidi Alayne

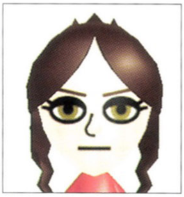
Known for decent grades, mad WarioWare skills

Hair:
"You may think that some of the Mii channel hairstyles are pretty ridiculous, but my sister really does do her hair this way."

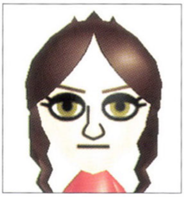


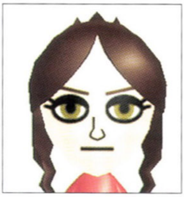
Eyes and Eyebrows:
"Straight brows, lots of eyeliner. Larger eyes and higher eyebrows make for a more feminine face."



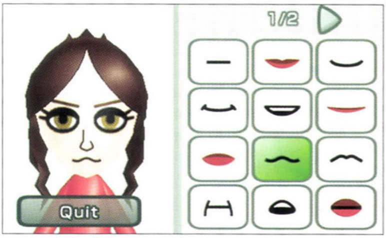


Nose:
"Most of the Mii noses start out very large. When you're designing a female Mii, don't be afraid to choose an interesting nose and then shrink it to make it cuter."





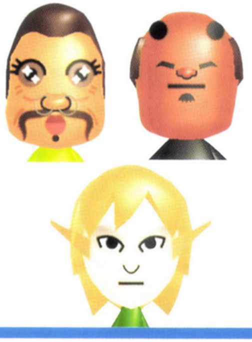
Mouth:
"This mouth was perfect for Geneva because it highlights her adorable overbite. I also lowered all her features to make the chin smaller. A smaller chin paired with bigger eyes give the impression of a foreshortened perspective—perfect for a petite Mii."

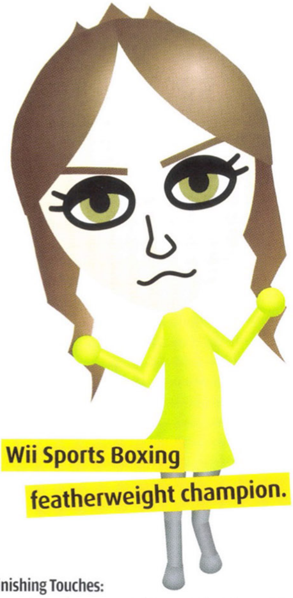


ENTER THE Mii-TRIX

Transcend Reality

Nothing is as it seems in the Mii editor. But if you approach the tool as Neo does the Matrix, the possibilities become endless. Eyes can be horns, eyebrows can be ears, glasses can be nose-rings—understanding this concept will make a Mii putty in your digital hands.





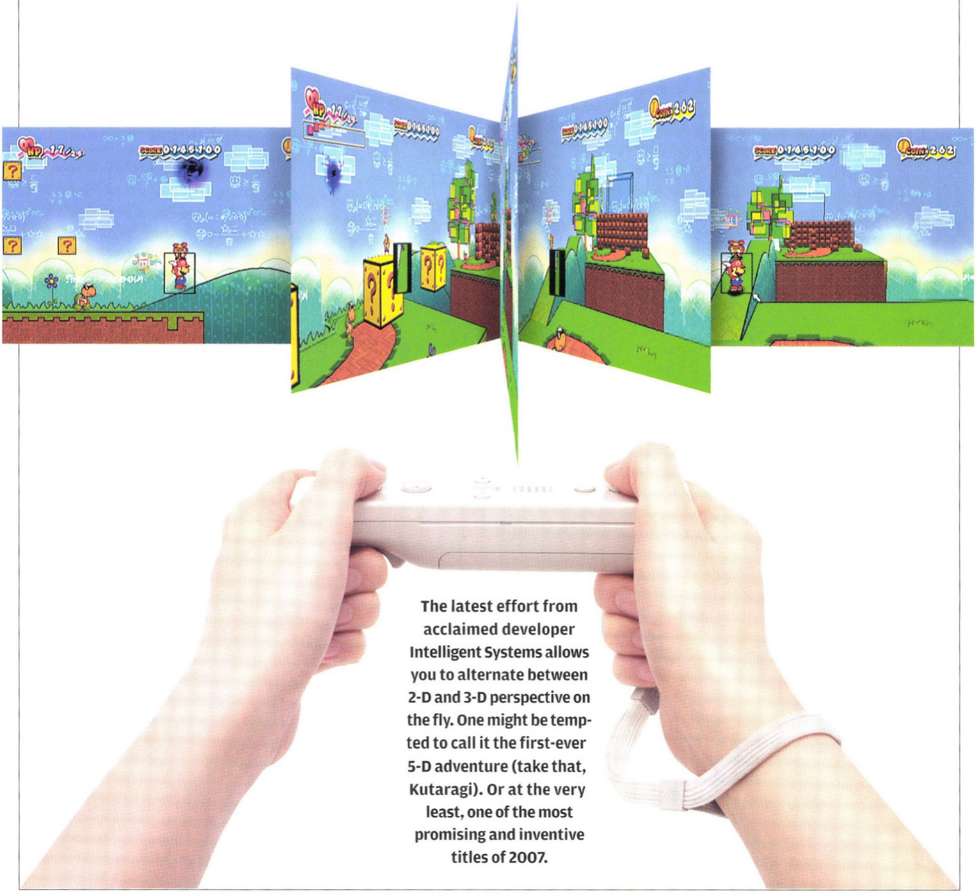
Wii Sports Boxing featherweight champion.

Finishing Touches:
"Sometimes the most satisfying part of making a Mii is picking the color of the outfit. There aren't many colors to choose from, but I was able to give my little sister her favorite bright-green dress. This made Geneva so happy that she forgave me for shaking her."

a matter of PerspectivE

Ever since the advent of the polygon, 2-D and 3-D have been embroiled in a bitter struggle for the hearts of gamers. But **Super Paper Mario** has finally found a way for these two rival viewpoints to work together.

By Steve Thomason



The latest effort from acclaimed developer Intelligent Systems allows you to alternate between 2-D and 3-D perspective on the fly. One might be tempted to call it the first-ever 5-D adventure (take that, Kutaragi). Or at the very least, one of the most promising and inventive titles of 2007.

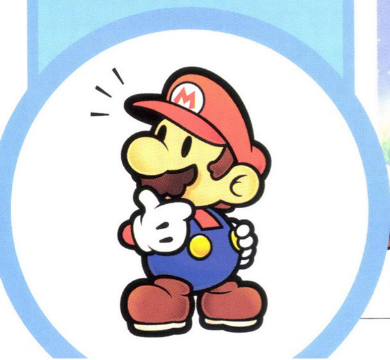
Page-Turner

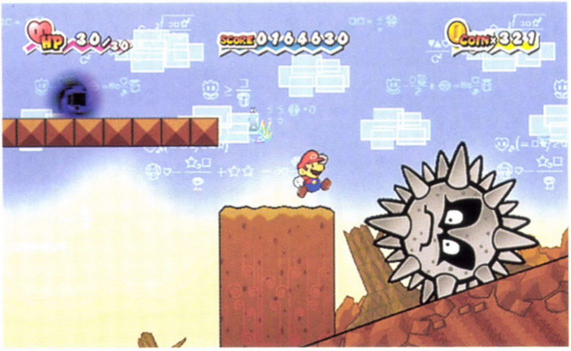
Our tale begins with the wedding of Bowser and Princess Peach. No, her hapless highness hasn't had a change of heart after all these years—she's forced into the unholy matrimony by one Count Bleck, a nefarious mastermind with a penchant for referring to himself in the third person and an obsession with destroying all worlds (sort of like Bob Dole). The count has in his possession a book called the *Dark Prognosticus* capable of predicting the future, and according to this malevolent tome, the marriage of a powerful king and a pure-hearted princess will open a dimensional rift that shall eventually swallow the entire universe. That's usually where Mario steps in, but prior to the ceremony, the heroic plumber is mysteriously transported to the interdimensional town of Flipside.

Upon his arrival in the bizarre burg, Mario is informed that only the hero written about in the *Light Prognosticus*—a book with a more optimistic view of the future than its dark counterpart—can stop Bleck and close the dimensional rift. Fortunately, the prophecy states that said hero will sport a red hat, blue overalls, and a sweet 'stache. Before he can fulfill his destiny, however, Mario must find the eight Pure Hearts scattered throughout the dimensions. Needless to say, we're not in the Mushroom Kingdom anymore.

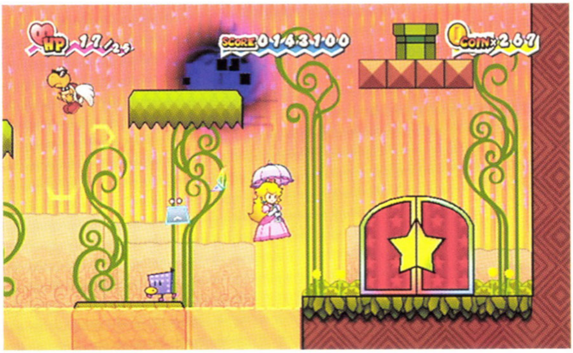
Beyond the Fold

Whereas previous Paper Marios were primarily role-playing games with a touch of platforming, Super Paper Mario inverts that formula. Enemy encounters are no longer turn-based affairs; Mario defeats his adversaries in real time, usually by jumping on them. In fact, the game initially feels very old-school. You hold the Wii remote sideways like an NES controller, using the Control Pad to move and the 2 Button to jump. But prepare to have your mind blown when you press the A Button to rotate the side-scrolling environments and view the action from a 3-D perspective. The seemingly flat world suddenly reveals its hidden depth; where a gaping chasm appeared impassable in 2-D, you'll find that the hills in the background serve as a path across the gorge in 3-D. In a room filled with wall-to-wall Thwomps, switching to a three-dimensional view will reveal that the enemies are paper-thin, allowing you to simply walk around them. It's a brilliant twist on the side-scrolling platformer, and the game constantly takes

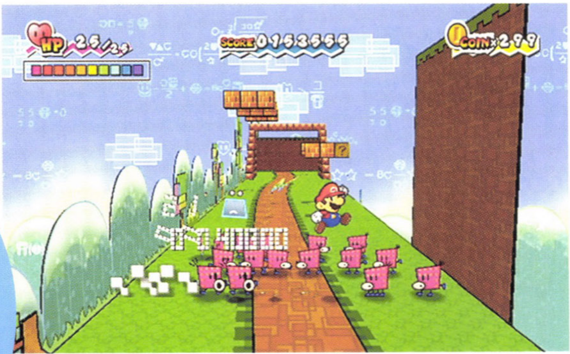




Super-sized baddies are a hallmark of the Paper Mario franchise, but you ain't seen nothing yet.



Gorgeous, isn't it? Why can't we get more hand-drawn splendor like this on home consoles?



Switching to the third dimension will often reveal a hidden item or treasure chest, but sometimes it will lead to less fortuitous consequences.

advantage of it in new and interesting ways. The result feels like nothing you've ever played before.

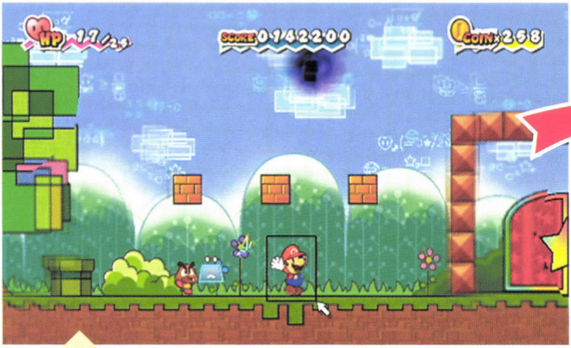
If you remain in the 3-D realm too long, however, Mario will gradually lose heart points (the game's version of hit points). Which leads us to Super Paper Mario's RPG elements. Your score in the game is akin to experience points—as you reach certain thresholds, Mario will level up, increasing his attack strength and HP. And in classic Mario fashion, you'll earn bonus points for dispatching foes in rapid succession (be it via bouncing from one enemy to another without touching the ground or by plowing through multiple adversaries with a Koopa shell). You can also score extra points by performing Stylish Moves; immediately after hitting an enemy, executing certain gestures with the Wii remote will cause Mario to strike a crowd-pleasing pose. The more extravagant the gesture, the more impressive the move and the more points you'll rack up.

Another vestige of the series' RPG roots is the inclusion of inventory items such as health-replenishing Shroom Shakes and a Sleepy Sheep that briefly causes enemies to doze off. You can either purchase these items with the coins you collect, or find them in treasure chests hidden throughout the levels. You'll also acquire special Catch Cards that increase the amount of damage your attacks deal to the foes depicted on the cards. The effect is cumulative, so you can put a major beatdown on a particular type of bad guy by collecting multiple copies of the same card.

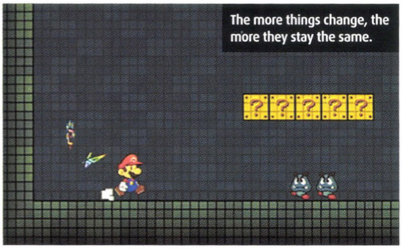
Additional means of heroic enhancement come in the form of power-ups, which you'll typically find by hitting a good old-fashioned ? Block. Some of the power-ups are familiar goodies that serve a modified purpose—mushrooms now restore Mario's health rather than make him bigger, for example—while others grant our hero brand-new benefits. A personal favorite is the Pal Pill, which causes a group of little 8-bit Marios to follow you around and act as your own personal mini army.

Super Friends

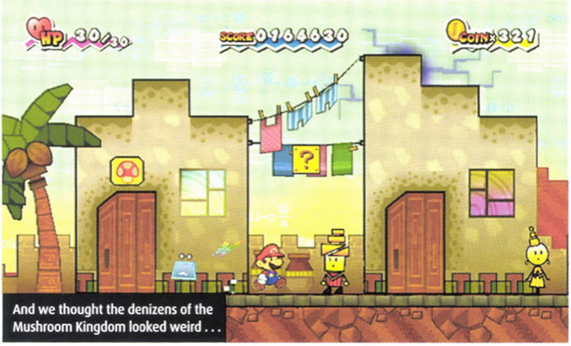
No matter how luxuriant his 'stache, even the greatest hero needs a little help from time to time. As the adventure progresses, Peach, Bowser, and one other beloved character (who must remain a mystery for now) will join the cause as playable characters. The ability to switch to a 3-D perspective is unique to Mario, but each of the other protagonists has a



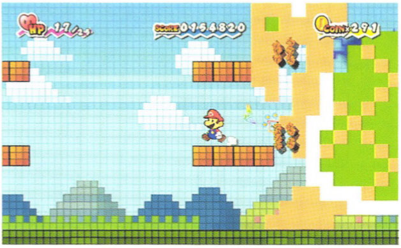
Reaching the door seems impossible with that barricade standing in your way . . .



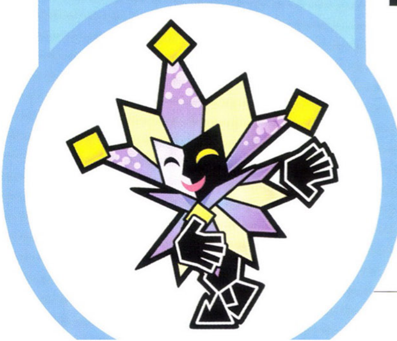
The more things change, the more they stay the same.



And we thought the denizens of the Mushroom Kingdom looked weird . . .



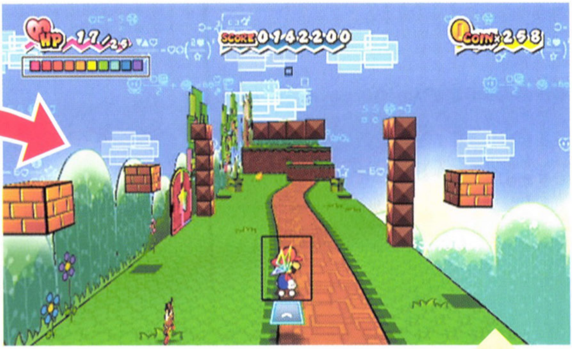
That Koopa must have taken a lot of "vitamins" over the last 20 years.



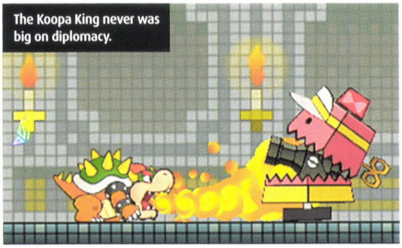
special skill as well. Peach, for instance, floats through the sky with her parasol, and Bowser uses his fire breath to roast all who would stand in his path. You can alternate between the heroes at any time, and you'll often need to use them in tandem to overcome certain challenges.

Throughout the game, Mario and friends will also recruit a number of fairy-like creatures called Pixls that bestow the group with new abilities. Your first Pixl, Tippy, lets you search for invisible objects and glean information about enemies by pointing the Wii remote at the screen and using it as a spotlight. Others might serve as explosives, allow you to pick up and throw objects, or act as a floating platform that can carry you across certain hazards. Remaining mindful of your Pixls' abilities is crucial; they often hold the key to vanquishing a boss or finding the entrance to a new world.

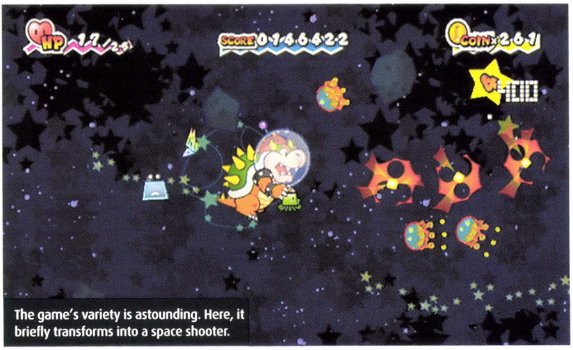
The more the merrier. In addition to enabling tons of gameplay variety, the sizable cast also provides consistent laughs. Like its predecessors, Super Paper Mario features excellent writing, but localization producer/manager Nate Bihldorff (who also worked on the previous Paper Mario titles) credits Intelligent Systems for most of the game's comedic punch. "The humor derives entirely from setting the scene (this level will be set in a nerdy iguana's fantasy castle that's populated by robotic cat butlers!), the crazy art direction of the characters (let's make this guy's mustache as long as his body!), the brilliant animations (let's make Bowser close his eyes and run forward pinwheeling his arms!), and then the entire dialogue tree that sets up the back and forth between characters," says Bihldorff. "The characterization we add (accents, delivery) is just the cherry on top of an already hilarious sundae." When necessary, however, Bihldorff and his team will alter certain sections of the game substantially so the humor makes sense to a North American audience. Localization writer/editor Erik Peterson adds, "We always want to keep the original spirit of the brilliant stuff Intelligent Systems has created, and sometimes that means totally rewriting sections so that the comedy comes across to gamers over here." It's a process that once again produces hilarious results. And in an espeically nice touch, your conversations with the game's inhabitants often vary depending on which character you're controlling. (Bowser in particular continues his meteoric rise to comedic stardom, and needs to get a game of his own posthaste.)



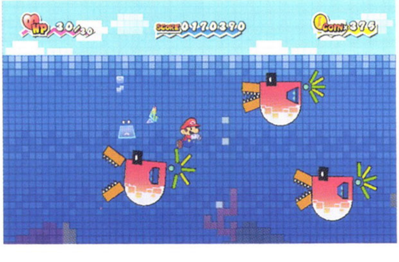
. . . but it always helps to get a different perspective on life's little challenges.



The Koopa King never was big on diplomacy.



The game's variety is astounding. Here, it briefly transforms into a space shooter.



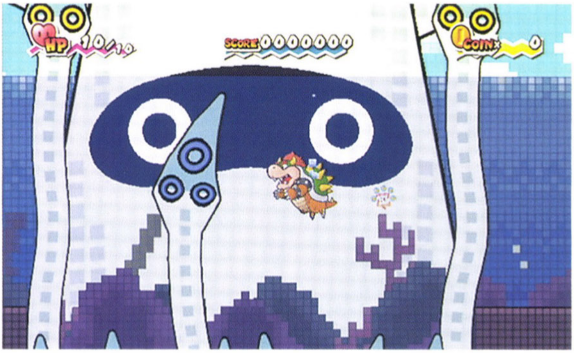
This is what happens when you overpollute the waters.

Marching to a Different Sheet

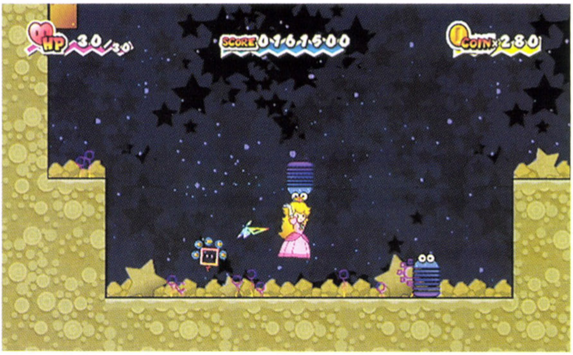
Based on what we've played thus far, Super Paper Mario appears to be as deep as it is creative. The game offers something different around every turn; one moment you're traversing a faithful re-creation of World 1-2 from the original Super Mario Bros. (complete with secret warp pipes at the end), and the next you're a contestant on an impromptu quiz show, trying to discern an ancient sorceress from her evil doppelganger. And the boss battles are fantastic. One especially memorable encounter has you fighting a giant spider in the ladies' room while the aforementioned sorceress hides in one of the stalls, reciting a magical cheer to knock out the arachnid's defenses. It's those little things that make Super Paper Mario feel so special: a lesser game might have had the sorceress simply yell out "Magic Break!" or something to that effect, but watching her hilarious cheerleading routine play out (via word bubbles) as you fight the terrifying spider really makes the scene. Every stage is just so densely packed with crazy, imaginative ideas; this is one of gaming's best (and most underrated) developers letting it all hang out.

And everything looks incredible (especially in 16:9 progressive scan). The game is by no means a technical marvel, but the art direction is absolutely inspired. Each of the game's eight worlds sports its own unique aesthetic, from the floating equations and abstract scenery of Lineland to the super-pixelated surroundings of the Bitlands. The usual troupe of Mushroom Kingdom players is joined by a sizable cast of wonderfully bizarre new characters and adversaries, as well. It's like falling down the Super Mario version of the rabbit hole.

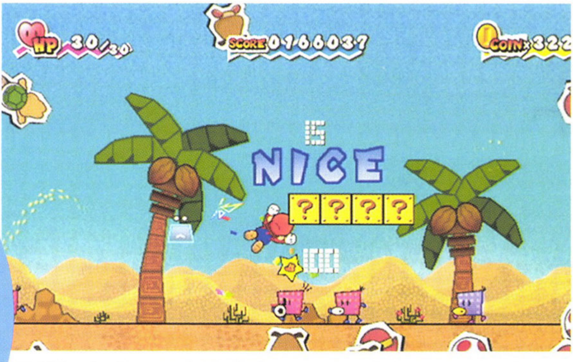
Super Paper Mario has gone a bit under the radar, perhaps due to its transition from GameCube to Wii, but this is one of the cleverest and most original titles to come along in quite some time. And with that, we're out of glowing adjectives to describe the game. Did we mention it's in 5-D? The interdimensional love-in begins this spring.



Bowser's about to make a lifetime supply of calamari.



The Thoreau Pixl brings back memories of Super Mario Bros. 2 by letting you grab enemies and hurl them at each other.



Mario's been jumping on enemies' heads a long time, so you can't blame the guy for wanting to show off a little bit.

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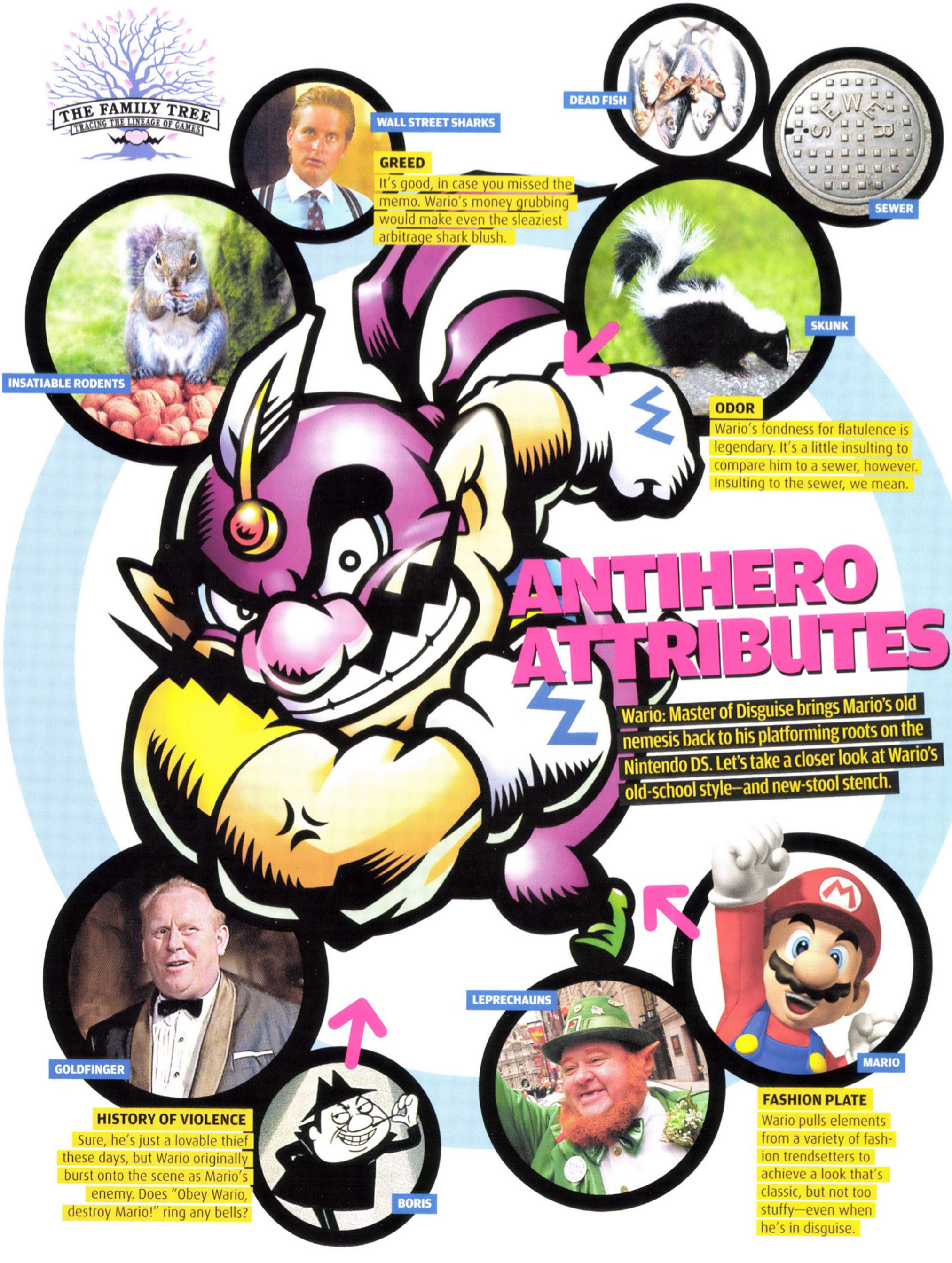
ANTIHERO ATTRIBUTES

Wario: Master of Disguise brings Mario's old nemesis back to his platforming roots on the Nintendo DS. Let's take a closer look at Wario's old-school style—and new-stool stench.


WALL STREET SHARKS
DEAD FISH
SEWER
INSATIABLE RODENTS
SKUNK
GOLDFINGER
BORIS
LEPRECHAUNS
MARIO

GREED

It's good, in case you missed the memo. Wario's money grubbing would make even the sleaziest arbitrage shark blush.

ODOR

Wario's fondness for flatulence is legendary. It's a little insulting to compare him to a sewer, however. Insulting to the sewer, we mean.

HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Sure, he's just a lovable thief these days, but Wario originally burst onto the scene as Mario's enemy. Does "Obey Wario, destroy Mario!" ring any bells?

FASHION PLATE

Wario pulls elements from a variety of fashion trendsetters to achieve a look that's classic, but not too stuffy—even when he's in disguise.

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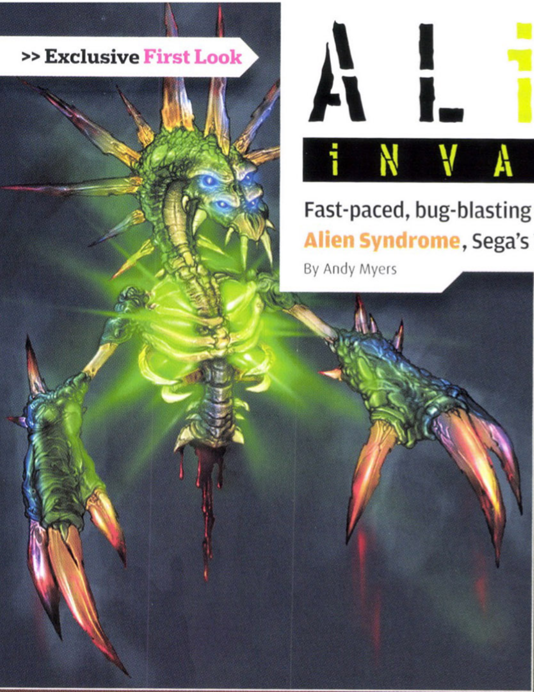
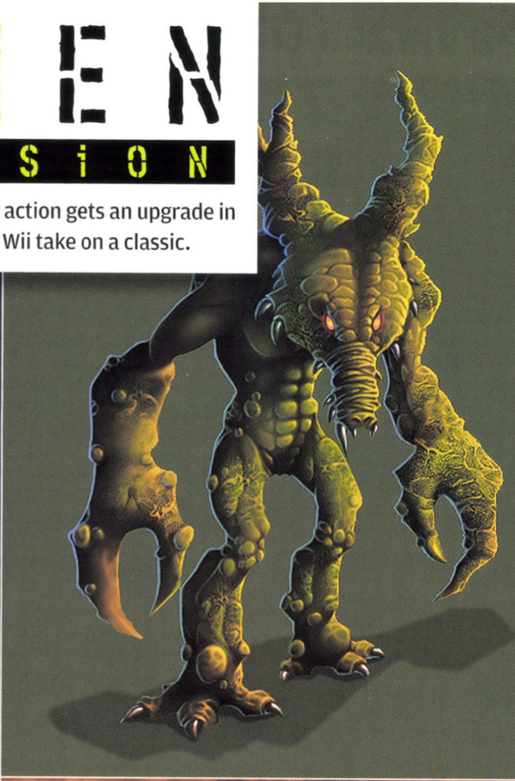
ALiEN

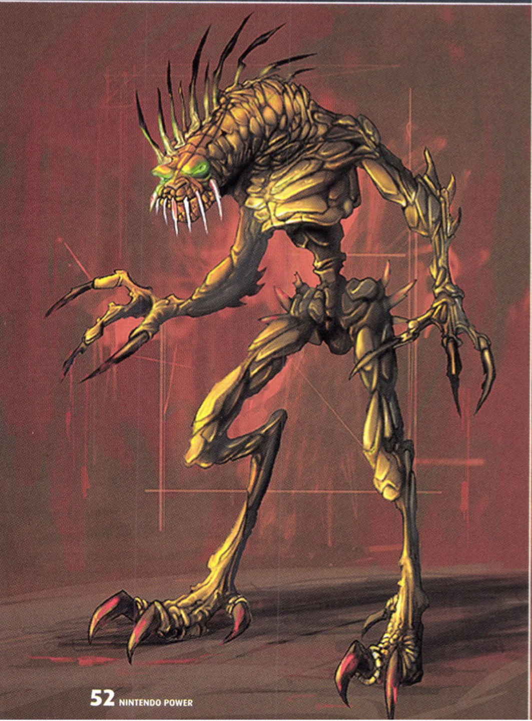
iNVASiON

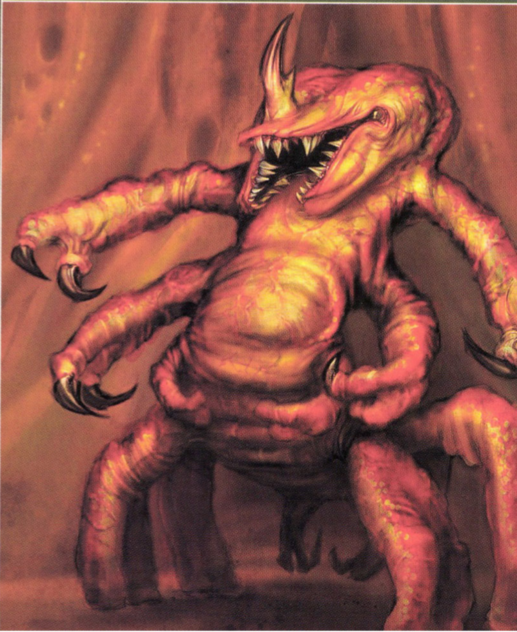
Fast-paced, bug-blasting action gets an upgrade in Alien Syndrome, Sega's Wii take on a classic.

By Andy Myers









It's an unusually sunny day in downtown San Francisco, and I'm playing Alien Syndrome with a bunch of strangers. No, I'm not at a retro arcade, nor is this a flashback to 1987. I'm visiting Sega of America, sitting among the company's genuinely giddy PR reps as they unveil a brand-new Alien Syndrome, a fresh take on the arcade classic. Old-school gamers remember Alien Syndrome as the game that blazed the trail for many of the shooters we know and love today, but unlike so many other franchises of the era, Alien Syndrome has remained silent for 20 years. Well, no longer. Sega means to not only resurrect the title, but to transform it into an action-RPG for Wii. Join us for a hands-on tour through the game's reimagined world.

ALIEN SYNDROME
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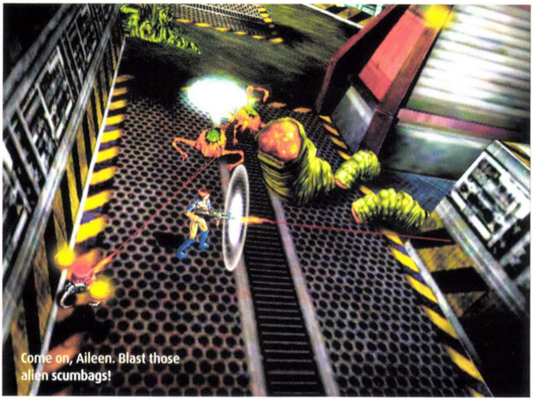
We love the '80s.



Come on, Aileen. Blast those alien scumbags!

ANDY ALAMANO, PRODUCER

> **"You don't have to know what happened in the first one."**
>
> **Andy Alamano, producer**

new life

Fans will be glad to know that the arcade action of the original Alien Syndrome is alive and well in the new game. The Wii title is a sequel of sorts, boasting an entirely original story fronted by a new character, Aileen. The heroine's adventure begins as she investigates a distress call issued by a space station, only to find that aliens have overrun the place—it's up to her to clean up the mess and find out what went wrong. "If you remember the original, there are some references to it," explains producer Andy Alamano after citing mentions of Ricky and Mary—the original game's heroes—in the dialogue. "But you don't have to know what happened in the first one." While the original had only a scantily developed plot, the Wii game fleshes out a complete story with cut-scenes and voiced-over dialogue. The story is further supported by stylishly illustrated stills between levels. "The style we were going for is a kind of science-fiction novel cover," says Alamano. "So there's these really cool painted cut-scenes, and they tell the story as you go through the game."

The story, though more elaborate than the original's, is only icing on the cake. Alien Syndrome is an action-RPG—emphasis on the "action." It's all about upgrading weapons and laying waste to hordes of alien invaders. Gamers can relive the vintage mayhem while playing with loads of new elements. You'll mow down aliens using long-range weapons such as lasers, machine guns, and flamethrowers, plus short-range electro-staffs. The game boasts more than 30 levels (including boss levels), introduces tons of new enemies and minibosses, and promises 20-plus hours of play. All that without your having to insert a single coin.

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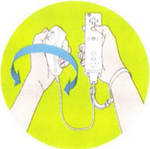
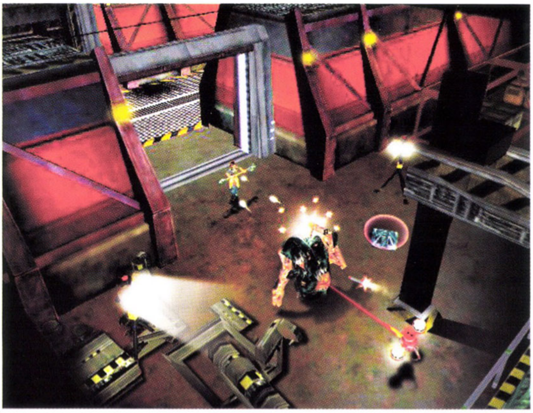
tipping point



CAMERA ACTION
Tilting the nunchuk will give player's quick control over the game's camera.

Alien Syndrome may appear to be an ordinary action-RPG, but it becomes much more once you get the Wii remote and nunchuk in your hands. In fact, the controls are so unique and intuitive that we found them to be the game's most impressive feature. "Usually controls are an obstruction to gameplay, to a certain extent," says product manager John Coghlan. "If you don't notice the controls, that's a good thing." This philosophy couldn't be more apparent. You'll move Aileen naturally using the nunchuk's analog stick, and you'll use the Wii remote as your weapon. With a long-range weapon equipped, pointing the remote controls an onscreen reticle that indicates the direction in which you'll fire. Much like in a first-person shooter, your character movement is isolated from your weapon movement—so you can run in one direction and fire in another. The concept isn't new for a top-down action-RPG, but the Wii remote adds a whole new level of depth, allowing you to control how far you'll fire with certain weapons. If you have a grenade launcher equipped, for instance, the distance of the reticle from your character determines how far you'll launch the grenade. "You say action-RPG, and you think of something in terms of dungeon-crawling—you go up to the enemy, and you press the attack button and they attack," says Alamano. "In [Alien Syndrome], enemies are shooting at you, and you don't just stand there and take the hits. You're moving, you're dodging. And now, with the Wii controller, circle-strafing is awesome. It's really fun."



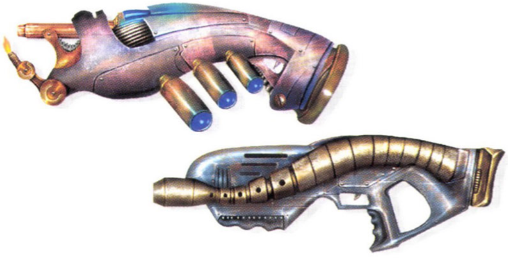
Sega gives developer Totally Games full credit for the unique control scheme. "This is [the developer's] first attempt at doing anything on Wii, and they are superexcited," shares Alamano. "They're all about this system." The basic features felt solid during our play-through, but Alamano assures us that there are even more ideas in the works. The team is planning on giving the player control over the camera by simply tilting the nunchuk, for instance. They're also playing around with the idea of assigning Aileen's melee staff to a swing of the remote rather than the more traditional button press (as it was in the version we played). In the end, though, Alamano promised that there will be multiple control configurations so people can play the way they want.

> **"If you don't notice the controls, that's a good thing."**
>
> **John Coghlan, product manager**

aliens of the deep

For those hoping there's a deeper side to the game, Alien Syndrome offers plenty of RPG elements to chew on. At the game's start, you can choose from five classes for Aileen: Firebug, Seal, Tank, Demolitions Expert, and Sharpshooter. Each class offers its own set of stats and skills, which can be upgraded in a number of interesting ways. "Characters are pretty customizable," tells Alamano. "Even though you start with a base stat, it's a base stat. You can make that character into whatever you want." This level of customization is achieved partially by collecting items dropped by felled enemies, but a permanent robot sidekick that follows Aileen into battle not only fights alongside you; it also serves as your hub for buying, selling, trading, and using various items. Alamano spells it out: "If you pick up a gun that you have doubles of, or a weapon you don't need, you can give it to your [robot], who converts it into resource points, which are basically currency. So you can turn a gun you don't want into a gun you do want."

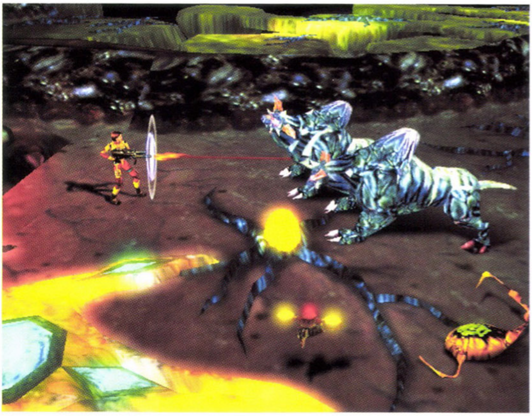
The game also includes many familiar RPG elements such as puzzles, an overlay map, random item drops, and more. You'll fight your way through each level by clearing rooms and gaining experience points, keeping an eye out for good experience-grinding spots where enemies tend to respawn. It's a classic action-RPG from the get-go, with extra challenges tacked on for the



Aileen's heavy weaponry controls like a breeze with the Wii remote.

aliens of the deep ...continued

more-diligent players. "As you play through the story, once you beat it, your profile saves," explains Alamano. "There's easy, normal, hard, and very hard. You can play through the next difficulty with your leveled-up character, and keep going to get higher-level items in another play-through."



> "Even though you start with a base stat, it's a base stat. You can make that character into whatever you want."

Andy Alamano

ALIEN AUTOPSY

From Alien Syndrome to Alien Syndrome

Alien Syndrome for Wii has elements in common not only with the arcade classic it's based on, but with a number of other games as well. But is its unique control scheme the next step in action-RPGs? Here we attempt to fill in the blanks between Alien Syndromes.

Alien Syndrome (1987)

Taking cues from even older top-down action games like Robotron 2084 and Berserk, Alien Syndrome implemented state-of-the-art graphics and processing power (for 1987, at least) to help define the run-and-gun experience, complete with large environments, two-player co-op, and boss battles.

+

Smash TV (1990)

Smash TV picked up where Alien Syndrome left off in terms of gameplay, replacing the fire button with a second joystick. This key feature allowed players to move in one direction and fire in another, further paving the way for the modern-day first-person shooter.

+

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (2001)

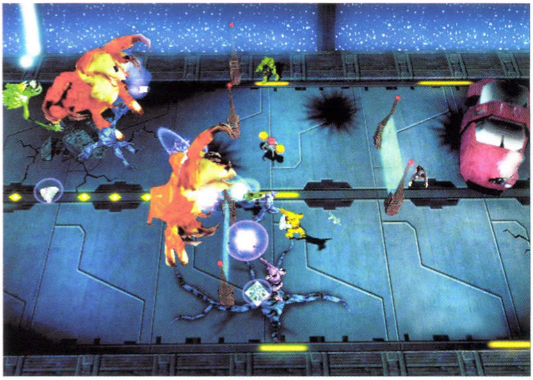
Though not the first action-RPG, nor the most important, Dark Alliance did play a big role in defining what action-RPGs are all about: button-mashing, leveling up, and collecting a crapload of items.

=

Alien Syndrome (2007)

Its sci-fi environment and story are reminiscent of the original. Its multidirectional control scheme harks back to Smash TV, but with another dimension by way of the Wii remote. And its overall structure and item-management system remind us of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance. So there it is: a math problem put to rest.

space camp



While much of Alien Syndrome is geared toward the hard-core enthusiast, it has something to offer to all gamers: a sweet multiplayer mode. Wii owners can play through the entire story in four-player co-op, basking in the crazy alien-killing frenzy with friends. "There's hundreds and hundreds of random drops—armor, weapons, gear," exclaims Alamano. "So, when you're playing four-player, it's gonna be this big race. You kill an enemy, he drops a cool weapon, and everyone's gonna try to race to get the items. And you can drop items and give them to other players as you go." We didn't get to try the multiplayer mode ourselves, as the game is still early in development. But it promises to be just as deep as the single-player mode, recalling the much-loved co-op action of the original.

Alien Syndrome is making a comeback. Its name may not hold the clout of some other classic titles, but the original was a masterpiece of its era. Its gameplay inspired years of tournament play and countless games followed its lead. Its premise had you stepping into the boots of a space marine to save humanity from a hostile alien takeover long before Halo existed. It's a franchise worthy of revival, and it's primed to be a definitive action-RPG for Wii. Expect the invasion to begin this summer.

INTERVIEW

We chat with Alien Syndrome producer Andy Alamano about classic gaming, science fiction, and pizza joints.

NP: What led to the decision to revive this particular franchise after such a long absence?

AA: Sega, right now, is reviving a lot of the old franchises. After Burner's coming out, Golden Axe, a few others I can't tell you about. Totally Games wanted to do something that was a shooter, arcade-style game, and this was the game that they came to us with. Going through a lot of iterations, the RPG aspect came up, and then when Totally Games found out about the Wii, they were totally excited about it. And here we are. It was the combination of a franchise, a gameplay idea, and a console. They all work together.

NP: Besides the original Alien Syndrome, are there any previous games, or maybe movies, that had an influence on the direction?

AA: *Aliens* the movie—obviously. I think that was more of an influence than the actual original arcade game. Metroid definitely was. In fact, [in] a lot of the early concepts that Totally Games had, [Aileen's] suit was all orange. We were like, wow, I wonder where you got that idea?

NP: What new elements do you think this game brings to the action-RPG genre?

AA: The number-one thing is probably the shooting aspect, the pointer. I don't know how many action-RPGs you can circle-strafe in. It's the combination of an action-RPG with the history of a classic arcade game, so it plays kind of like both. It's a top-down action-RPG with all the stats and strategy, but the fundamental control and action gameplay is all classic Alien Syndrome.

NP: Totally Games is a dev team that's known for aerial shooters, mostly. What has the switch to a more adventure-oriented game been like?

AA: They're big sci-fi fans, and they're also big RPG fans. They wanted to go into the next gen with something different, and they wanted to get onboard with doing a classic franchise. They wanted to do a sci-fi action game, and this was their opportunity.

NP: Did anyone that worked on the original **Alien Syndrome** work on this one?

AA: Honestly, I'm ashamed to say, I don't really know anything about the production of the classic Alien Syndrome. The only thing I know about Alien Syndrome in the arcade is that when I was like nine, I used to play it at a pizza shop with my brother. That's about it.

NP: Are you guys considering having the original game be unlockable, or maybe available on Virtual Console?

AA: I'm considering it. I'm working with the team to try to get that to happen. No promises, though. We'd very much like to. I'll leave it at that.

> **"The number-one thing is probably the shooting aspect, the pointer."**
>
> **Andy Alamano**

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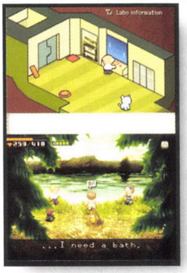
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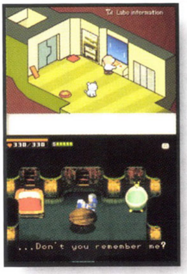
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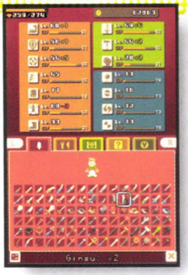

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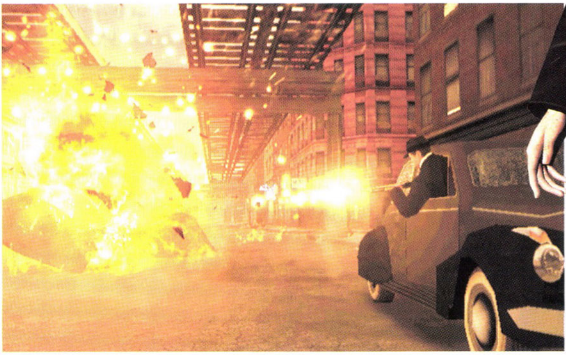
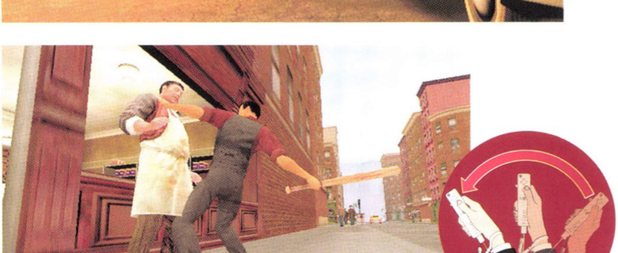
Fun for the Whole Family

EA's retelling of film saga *The Godfather* reaches Wii with The Godfather: Blackhand Edition. Find out why motion control makes it an offer you can't refuse.

By George Sinfield

Though last year's Godfather games missed Nintendo consoles, EA's The Godfather: Blackhand Edition will come to Wii exclusively this March with even more grit and drama from mid-20th-century New York City criminal life than its previous incarnations. The game puts you in the shoes of a made man on the rise, and you'll use both your fists and finesse to extort shop owners, influence authorities, and gain an upper hand over competing organizations in the name of the Corleone family. The Wii title adds what senior producer Joel Wade calls "an expansion pack worth of new content" to EA's original The Godfather: The Game release, along with motion-based controls that let you get your hands dirty on the streets of the Big Apple like never before by using the techniques of Don Fanucci's Blackhand gang. Taking place between 1945 and 1955, the game plays through the events of the series' first film and novel while giving you the freedom to make your own mark on the underworld.





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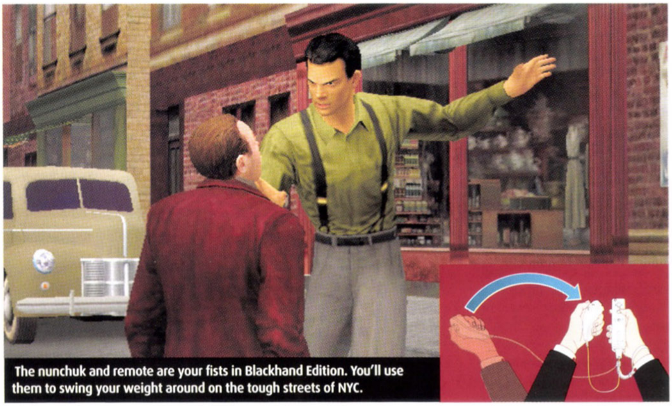
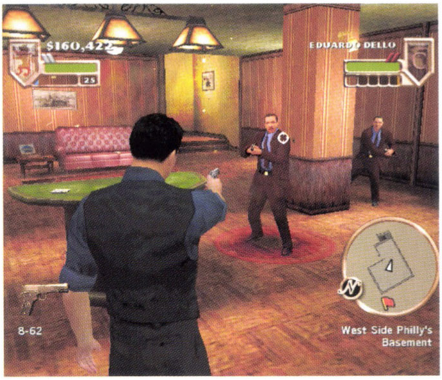
Strong Arm

When you step into the conference room known as The Mattresses (a term from *The Godfather* that refers to taking physical action) at EA's Redwood Shores headquarters, the first thing you notice is a stuffed horse head (another *Godfather* reference) propped up on a couch; it's a perfect touch of comfort for a demonstration of The Blackhand Edition with the game's producers. A few minutes with the game helps you understand why the producers were chomping at the bit to adapt the title for Wii. The new iteration represents a complete reworking of the game's character animations and control scheme. The team began with the types of actions players would want to perform as a gangster for hire while using the freedom of Wii controls, then created new animation to support those motions. "It's really about letting players feel like they're in control," says executive producer Hunter Smith. "The [Wii] controllers really take it to the next dimension." For hand-to-hand combat, the nunchuk controls your character's left hand while the remote controls his right hand. Holding the Z Button lets you lock onto targets, and gestures do the rest. You can grab another mobster by the lapels by reaching out with both hands, headbutt him by pulling your hands toward your head, punch him by swinging your arms, and even toss him through a window with a pushing motion to show him who's the boss. The scheme extends to melee weapons and firearms, giving you pinpoint accuracy with your shots.

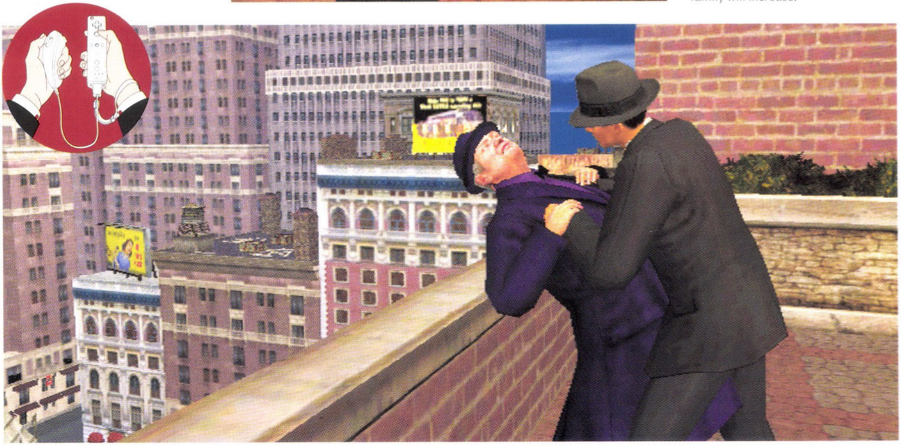


The nunchuk and remote are your fists in Blackhand Edition. You'll use them to swing your weight around on the tough streets of NYC.



Deep Underground

To go along with the hands-on control scheme, the Blackhand Edition offers new opportunities to perform gangster-style tasks for the Corleone family and new ways to apply pressure to local businesses as part of the game's protection racket. "There are many ways to earn respect," explains creative director Mike Olsen. "As you apply pressure, the amount of money that a merchant will pay goes up." That is, until the target reaches a breaking point that causes him to fight back. One of the challenges is to figure out what actions, such as a threat of violence or making a mess of the merchant's shop, will cause him to pay his respects. The better you are at solving that puzzle, the more your standing in the family will increase.

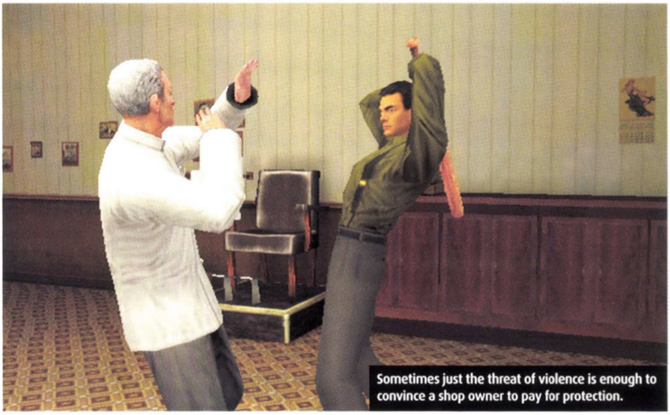


From Soldier to Don

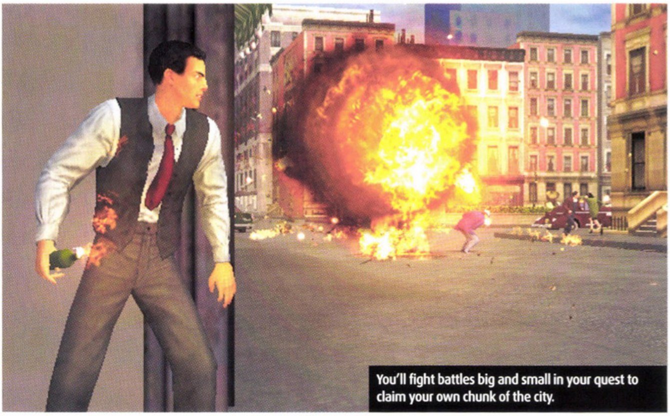
"We didn't want to just tell the story of The Godfather in a linear fashion," says Wade. "We decided that we could get a richer gaming experience out of it if we put you into the world and let your story intersect with the *Godfather* story at key moments, but still let you branch out on your own."

You start as a foot soldier for the family, working under Luca Brasi. As you perform tasks, you gain respect in the community and work your way up to associate, capo, underboss, and eventually don (if your ambition stretches that far). Says Smith, "The game is about taking over this world, managing the respect system, the economy, and the opposing families." As you immerse yourself in the world, you learn how to influence its inhabitants and keep from going over the edge. That makes the aiming accuracy of the Wii remote crucial. You can influence a target by shooting his arm or leg, but, as Smith says, "you can't extort money from a dead merchant," making kneecaps and elbows good targets. In addition to making money from extortion, you can perform heists (after paying off the police to look the other way), pull off contract hits, highjack trucks, and do favors for others. The Blackhand Edition adds blackmail for additional illicit activity.

The environment is not an exact replica of the New York City of the 1940s and '50s, but many of the street names and landmarks (such as the Flatiron building) are authentic. The developers used a city planner to help lay out the world to make it functional and your navigation of the city realistic.



Sometimes just the threat of violence is enough to convince a shop owner to pay for protection.

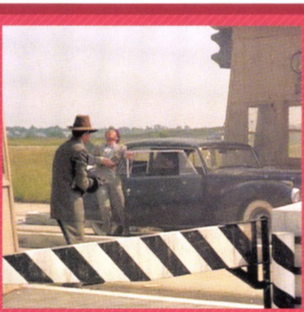


You'll fight battles big and small in your quest to claim your own chunk of the city.

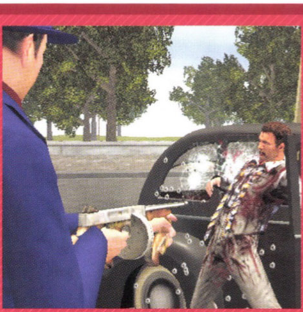
GODFATHER 101

Play the Movie

Though the game is not a scene-by-scene re-creation of the film, it includes more than 20 likenesses (and some voices) of the movie's actors, including James Caan as Sonny Corleone and the late Marlon Brando as Don Vito Corleone. However, although Michael Corleone is in the game, Al Pacino's likeness is not used. You play a part in the following scenes from the film (and several others), but you are not able to influence their outcome as it applies to the story.



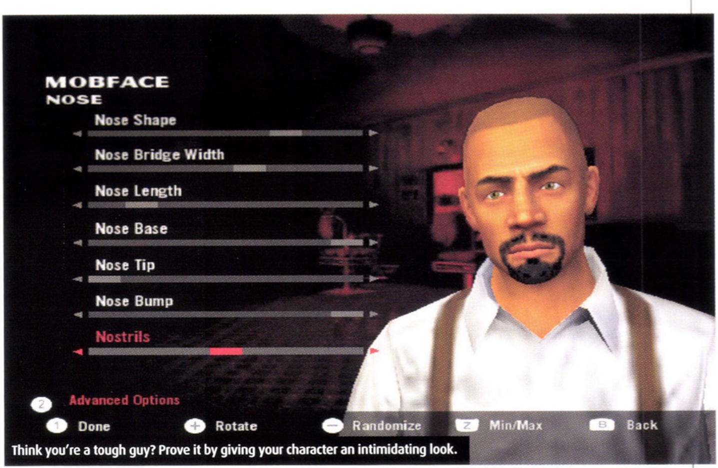
The Scene: Hothead Sonny is drawn from the family's compound to a tollbooth where he meets his end.



Your Part: You follow Sonny to the tollbooth, then chase his assassins after the hit.

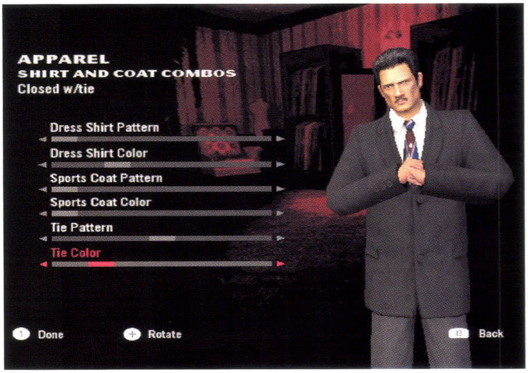
Play the Part

One advantage of playing a character who is new to the *Godfather* story is the way that you mold his appearance to impact his rise through the ranks of the family. The adventure begins with a character-generating interface that gives you minute control over your gangster's features, including 10 adjustments for his nose alone. As you advance through the story, you earn skill points to spend on a variety of abilities that will help you advance. The skills follow two distinct paths: the heavy-handed route of Sonny Corleone (which increases your gun-handling skills among other things) or the even-handed path of consigliere Tom Hagen (which develops your negotiating abilities). The clothing that you choose for your character influences his standing in the world, proving that clothes make the thug. Watch for our game review next issue.


MOBFACE
NOSE
Nose Shape
Nose Bridge Width
Nose Length
Nose Base
Nose Tip
Nose Bump
Nostrils
2 Advanced Options
1 Done
+ Rotate
− Randomize
Z Min/Max
B Back

Think you're a tough guy? Prove it by giving your character an intimidating look.

RESTAURANT


APPAREL
SHIRT AND COAT COMBOS
Closed w/tie
Dress Shirt Pattern
Dress Shirt Color
Sports Coat Pattern
Sports Coat Color
Tie Pattern
Tie Color
1 Done
+ Rotate
B Back

The Scene: Don Corleone is the target of a hit attempt, causing a power shift in the family.

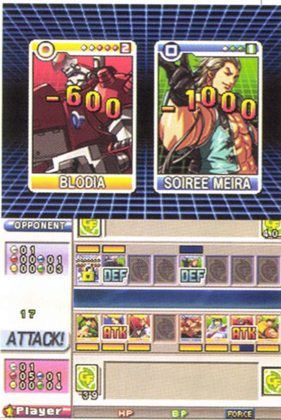
Your Part: You can't stop the hit from happening, but you can drive the don to the hospital, keeping him safe from thugs who want to finish the job.

CLASH of the CARDS

The crunching of bones gives way to the dealing of cards in SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS. Here's what to expect when two power-packed worlds collide.

By Chris Hoffman

You may have played collectible card-battling games on Nintendo systems before, but never anything quite like SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS. Similar to other virtual TCGs, you and your opponent (either human or computer-controlled) square off with customizable 50-card decks and attempt to deplete each other's hit points. But what makes Card Fighters DS stand out—aside from its accessible gameplay and intuitive touch-screen interface—is that the cards are based on some of the most beloved characters in all of gaming. By harnessing the warriors from games like Fatal Fury, Street Fighter II, The Last Blade, Resident Evil, Samurai Shodown, Rival Schools, Art of Fighting, Ghosts 'n Goblins, and many more, you can create your own card armies based on either the SNK or the Capcom universe—or a combination of both. Prepare for battle by mastering the tactics on the following pages.



This game ain't just about cards. It's about cards that kick some serious butt.

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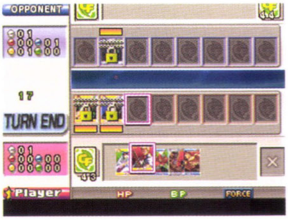
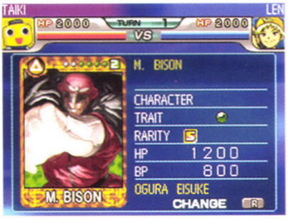
ON THE OFFENSIVE

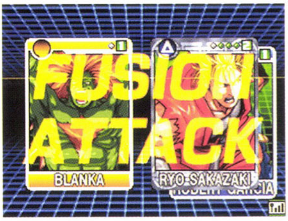
Every round of Card Fighters DS alternates between offensive and defensive phases. At the beginning of each match, a roll of the dice determines who gets to strike first; if you go first you have one chance to strike an opponent without retribution, but if you go second you'll have the potential to play a greater number of cards.

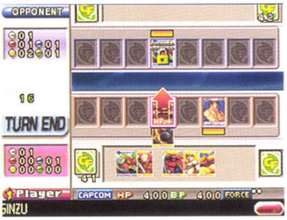

OPPONENT
17
TURN END
Player
HP
BP
FORCE

On your offensive turn, your main goals are to put Character Cards onto the play field ("the ring") and attack your adversary with any cards that are already active. After you use a card, it's "frozen" (temporarily unusable) for the remainder of the round, so selecting which cards to attack with and which cards to defend with is a key strategic decision.


TAIKI
LEN
HP 2000
TURN 1
HP 2000
VS
M. BISON
CHARACTER
TRAIT
RARITY
HP 1200
BP 800
OGURA EISUKE
CHANGE
R
M.BISON

When you're choosing which cards to put into the ring, two of the biggest factors to consider are its BP (Battle Points) and its HP (Hit Points). BP represents a card's attack power, and HP represents its defensive strength. Obviously, the more BP and HP a card has, the stronger it is. By tapping the cards in your hand, you can quickly scan each card's statistics to see which ones are the most advantageous.

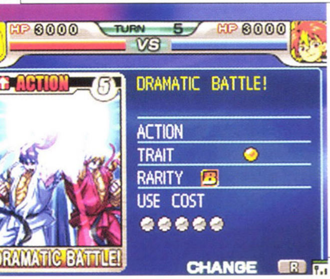

FUSION ATTACK
BLANKA
RYO SAKAZAKI


OPPONENT
16
TURN END
Player
CAPCOM HP 400 BP 400 FORCE

Prepare to Attack

If you have an unfrozen card in the ring, you can use it to attack during your offensive turn. If you execute a normal attack, you'll inflict damage equal to the attacking card's BP on a defending card's HP or, if your opponent has no defense, on his health bar. However, if you perform a fusion attack, you can execute a powerful piercing assault that damages defending cards and almost always depletes your opponent's health as well. You can unite same-colored cards to perform fusion attacks.

Another tactic you can use during your offensive phase is to use cards for backup. When you back up with a card that's in your hand, you'll sacrifice that card but its HP will be donated to a damaged card of the same color that's already in the ring. By effectively using backup, you can keep powerful cards in play longer.


HP 3000
TURN 5
HP 3000
VS
ACTION
DRAMATIC BATTLE!
ACTION
TRAIT
RARITY
USE COST
CHANGE
R

Call to Action

In addition to Character Cards, you can use Action Cards during your offensive turn. Action Cards don't have HP or BP, but they can create a variety of effects, such as instantly eliminating an opponent's card of your choosing, sacrificing one of your cards' HP to increase its BP, damaging your opponent's health bar directly, unfreezing all frozen cards, letting you draw additional cards, and much more.

SNK

When you've got the warriors of SNK on your side, you're backed by some of the toughest fighters around, including many that originated on SNK's NeoGeo console from the early '90s. Here's a refresher course on SNK's legacy.

1P
5200
11
KYO
RALF
1 EX

The King of Fighters
Featuring a mix of original fighters and characters from other SNK series, The King of Fighters is among the most respected 2-D fighting series around due to its precise feel and team-based combat.

1UP=1
FREE PLAY

Metal Slug
It's you and a friend against an entire enemy army when you take on the run-and-gun thrills of Metal Slug. You can experience every Metal Slug arcade game in the recently released Metal Slug Anthology on Wii.

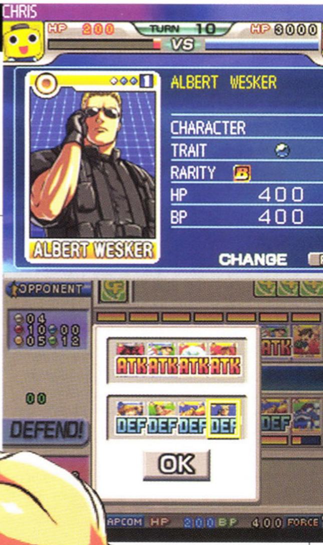
P1= 21750
KO
HAOHMARU
89

Samurai Shodown
At a time when most fighting games offered hand-to-hand combat, Samurai Shodown bucked the trend with a weapons-based fighter. Versions of Samurai Shodown came to the SNES and Game Boy in 1994.

HIT 513200
COM
59
TERRY BOGARD

Garou: Mark of the Wolves
Mark of the Wolves continues the Fatal Fury story in a new generation, centered around a grizzled Terry Bogard and his adopted son. It also features a fighter named Khushnood Butt . . .who fights bears.

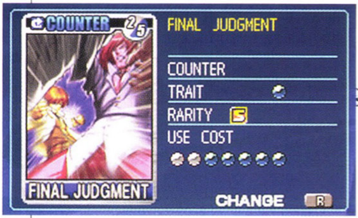
THE BEST DEFENSE


CHRIS
HP 200
TURN 10
VS
HP 3000
ALBERT WESKER
CHARACTER
TRAIT
RARITY B
HP 400
BP 400
ALBERT WESKER
CHANGE
OPPONENT
DEFEND!
ATK ATK ATK ATK
DEF DEF DEF DEF
OK
CAPCOM HP 300 BP 400 FORCE

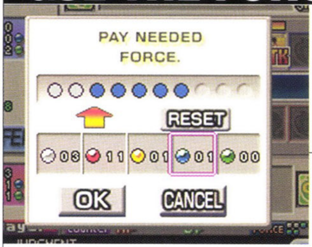
The goal during your defensive turn is simple: to thwart your opponent's offense. For each card that's attacking, you'll need to defend with a card of your own, or else the attack will deplete your health bar—if it becomes empty, you'll lose the match. When a defending card and an attacking card collide, they'll unleash their attacks on each other; if either card's HP is more than the opposing card's BP, it'll survive the attack and be usable again the next round; if not, the card will be destroyed. Even if you lose a card in battle, it's often worth it to protect your life bar. Of course, if you used all your cards to attack on your offensive turn, they'll usually all be frozen when it's time to defend, leaving you completely vulnerable—generally not a good idea.

Counter Strike

Your defensive turn is your opportunity to unleash Counter Cards. Like Action Cards, Counter Cards have numerous special abilities, such as allowing you to heal, freeze enemy cards, nullify fusion attacks, or force your opponent to discard cards before he can attack. Clever use of Counter Cards can put a quick end to your enemy's offense.


COUNTER
2 5
FINAL JUDGMENT
COUNTER
TRAIT
RARITY S
USE COST
FINAL JUDGMENT
CHANGE
R

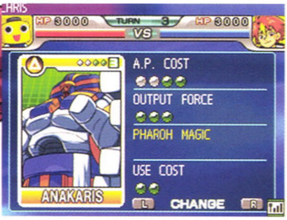
USE THE FORCE

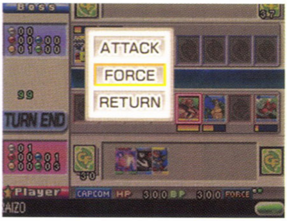

PAY NEEDED FORCE.
RESET
03
11
01
01
00
OK
CANCEL

Except for basic attacking and defending, virtually every action in Card Fighters DS requires the use of Force; you need it to put Character Cards in the ring, use Action or Counter Cards, initiate fusion attacks, and back up other cards. There are five colored types of Force: red, yellow, green, blue, and white; the color (or colors) of Force required usually depends on the card you're using. Managing your Force is essential for victory, which is why cards with low Force cost (such as Axl, Tung Fu Rue, and Blanka) can be very effective in the opening rounds, when Force is scarce.

Force the Issue

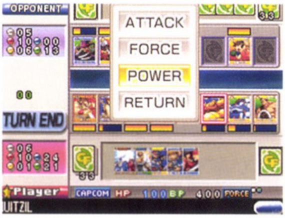
There are three ways to get Force during a match. First, at the beginning of your offensive turn you get one white Force, along with one colored Force per card you have in the ring. Since the Force you receive corresponds to the colors of the cards in the ring, you may want to build a deck using cards that are predominantly one or two colors; this will build up more Force of that type and thus allow you to bring in your more-powerful cards faster. The second way to get Force is to sacrifice one of the cards in your hand—particularly a weak card or a high-cost card that you're unable to use effectively. The third way to get Force is to manually freeze one of your own cards that's already in the ring, although this renders the card useless until your next turn.


CHRIS
HP 3000
TURN 3
VS
HP 3000
A.P. COST
OUTPUT FORCE
PHAROH MAGIC
USE COST
ANAKARIS
L
CHANGE
R


Boss
ATTACK
FORCE
RETURN
TURN END
Player
CAPCOM HP 300 BP 300 FORCE

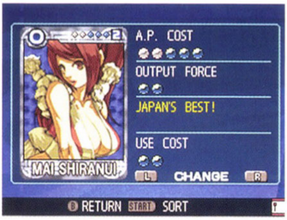
UNLEASH YOUR POWER

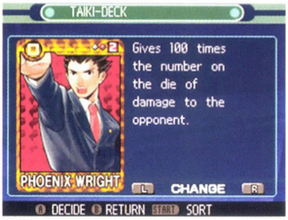
Character Cards are for more than attacking and defending—many of them also have special powers that can tip the battle in your favor. Like Action Cards and Counter Cards, special powers provide a wide array of benefits, and they usually cost Force to use. Special powers come in three varieties: square, which you can activate only when you place a card in the ring; triangle, which can be activated at any time during an offensive turn; and circle, which are always activated (and usually provide their advantages during attacks or counterattacks).

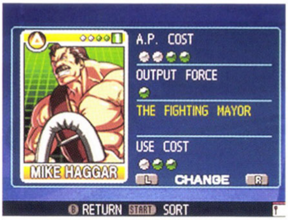

OPPONENT
ATTACK
FORCE
POWER
RETURN
TURN END
Player
CAPCOM HP 100 BP 400 FORCE
UITZIL

Special Effects

Special powers offer assistance in a number of ways. For example, when you use Phoenix Wright's Objection!, you roll a die and deal damage equal to 100 times the number rolled; when Mai defends against an attacking card, you automatically generate extra Force; and Mike Haggar's special power lets you see the cards in your opponent's hand before a random pair of them are discarded.

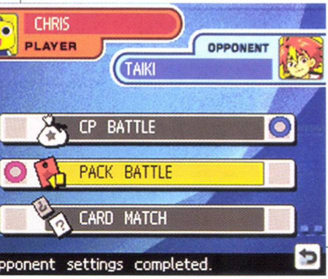

A.P. COST
OUTPUT FORCE
JAPAN'S BEST!
USE COST
MAI SHIRANUI
L CHANGE R
RETURN START SORT


Gives 100 times the number on the die of damage to the opponent.
TAIKI-DECK
PHOENIX WRIGHT
L CHANGE R
DECIDE RETURN START SORT


A.P. COST
OUTPUT FORCE
THE FIGHTING MAYOR
USE COST
MIKE HAGGAR
L CHANGE R
RETURN START SORT

THE BATTLE BEGINS

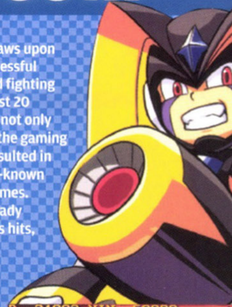
Card Fighters DS provides three ways to test your card-battling skills: story mode, versus mode, and an unlockable battle mode. Playing through the story mode is essential to building up your deck: As you fight your way through the 21 levels of the Card Tower in an attempt to defeat an evil supercomputer, you'll earn cash, win cards and decks, and have the ability to buy booster packs in shops. The versus mode lets you use the cards you've acquired in story mode to challenge other human opponents, while the battle mode allows you to fight previously defeated bosses in exhibition matches.


pponent settings completed.
CHRIS
PLAYER
OPPONENT
TAIKI
CP BATTLE
PACK BATTLE
CARD MATCH

A Friendly Wager

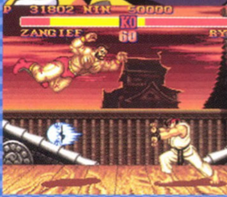
When you compete against another player in a versus match, you can simply fight for fun, or you can put it all on the line by betting virtual cash, single cards, or entire unopened packs. Don't even think about cheating—if you try to disconnect while you're on the losing end of a match, you'll forfeit your wager. Will you score the victory or go down in humiliating defeat? The outcome's in the cards.

CAPCOM

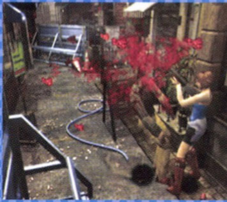


The Capcom roster draws upon some of the most successful action, adventure, and fighting franchises from the last 20 years. Capcom's titles not only consistently redefine the gaming landscape—they've resulted in some of the most well-known characters in video games. In case you aren't already familiar with Capcom's hits, here's the rundown.

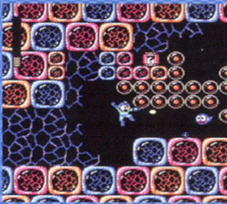
Street Fighter
When you think of fighting games, you have to think of Street Fighter. Street Fighter II reinvented its genre in 1991 with its diverse cast and creative attacks, and the series has continued with many follow-ups.


31802 NIN 50000
KO
ZANGIEF
60

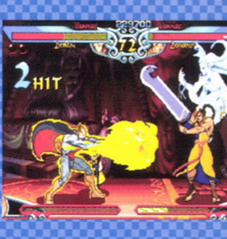
Resident Evil
Zombies are everywhere, you're low on ammo, and who knows what's lurking outside the window. When Resident Evil arrived in 1996, it taught gamers that being afraid was a very good thing.



Mega Man
The adventures of heroic robot Mega Man have appeared on almost every game system known to man, and in many different forms. The series' big draw is the ability to obtain weapons from your fallen foes.



Darkstalkers
While the characters of Street Fighter dominate by day, at night the Darkstalkers come out to fight. A vampire, a mummy, a werewolf, and a merman are among the cast in this horror-themed fighting series.



LUNAR LEGACY

By moonlight or sunshine, bask in the glow of this one-of-a-kind Lunar Knights masterpiece!

NINTENDO POWER
PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES
April 2007
EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

"Lunar Knights" is a trademark of Konami Digital Entertainment Co., Ltd. Lunar Knights is an action-RPG about fighting vampires.

ALIEN SYNDROME™
Tyler

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

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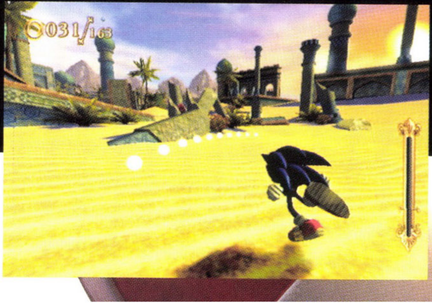
RING MASTER

Slip on your sneakers: we run through select missions in Sonic and the Secret Rings for Wii to deliver strategy worthy of a gold medal.

By Chris Shepperd



Building on the Basics

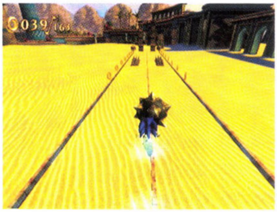
After only a short time playing Sonic and the Secret Rings, you'll be pretty familiar with the game's fundamentals—running, jumping, grinding, etc. But these skills are deceptively complex. If your eye is on the gold-medal prize, be sure to keep the following advanced concepts in mind while you're barreling toward the goal.

The Long & Short of It

You might be able to eke through most levels with some sloppy jumping skills, but if it's gold medals you seek, you better have hops. Jumps come in two varieties: short jumps can clear low obstacles without scrubbing too much speed, while Charge Jumps soar higher into the air but at the expense of speed and vulnerability. Where and how you land is just as important as how you got into the air in the first place. Practice the Jump Cancel, a technique that makes you fall straight down and stop on a dime. It's a key maneuver for snagging items that rest dangerously close to hazards.

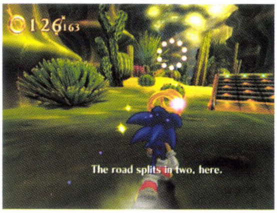
The Daily Grind

Rail-grinding is an excellent way to gain a quick speed boost, but after the initial burst of speed you'll begin to slow. While you're grinding, perform short hops to regain your lost momentum. On parallel rails, be prepared to switch which rail you're riding; one of them may come to a dicey end. Additionally, look for lines of rings floating in midair; usually if there isn't an apparent way to grab them, it's a sign that they're hovering above an invisible rail.



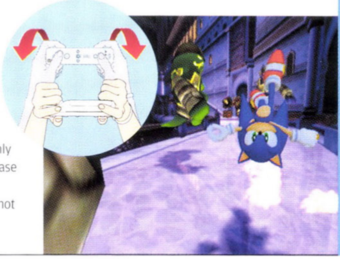
Multiple Choice

Many areas have multiple routes to choose from on the fly, and they're seldom equal in length or difficulty. The fork in the trail isn't always obvious, either—look for evidence such as platforms and rails off in the distance that you can't seem to reach. Often one path will provide the quickest route (albeit frequently with greater risks). The other path may lead to Fire Souls, the well-hidden items that you can collect to unlock minigames and other features for Party mode.



Back the Hog Up

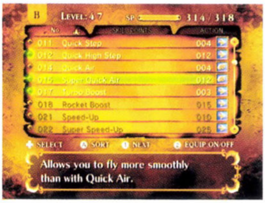
Did you just fly past something valuable? Skid to a stop and step back until you can grab it. When you're on the ground, rotate the Wii remote back toward you—Sonic will come to a halt, then start pacing backward. Sneaky level designers love hiding Fire Souls below high ledges—sometimes the only way to grab them is to land then walk back to the base of the ledge. Back-stepping is also useful for going back to defeat enemies you passed, but be careful not to backpedal into a monster's arms.



RING KING

Customized Skill Sets

Skills increase Sonic's abilities in special ways, such as improving midair movement or increasing the range of his homing attack. Every time you acquire a new skill, you can activate it via a Skill Ring—a list of skills that you can customize. Sonic has four skill rings; use them to create specialized sets of skills for performing particular tasks. We've outlined a few suggestions for how to set up your Skill Rings:



No		SKILL POINTS	ACTION
011	Quick Step	004	
012	Quick High Step	012	
014	Quick Air	004	
015	Super Quick Air	012	
017	Turbo Boost	003	
018	Rocket Boost	015	
021	Speed-Up	010	
022	Super Speed-Up	025	

Allows you to fly more smoothly than with Quick Air.

The Light of Speed

For some missions, you can ignore all your nifty techniques and concentrate on just going fast. Only a handful of skills make you go *faster*; your best bet is to equip skills that help you reach top speed quicker, such as Landing Dash, which allows you to run faster than usual when landing from a jump.

Rail-Shooting

You'll find rails in most stages, but some stages feature many more of them than others. For such levels, set up a Skill Ring with obvious skills such as Quick Grind, but also with skills that make it easier to move laterally in midair, such as Quick Air, which will help you hop from rail to rail more accurately.

The Good Fight

For missions where you must defeat a set number of enemies in as little time possible with moves such as H-Expand, create a Skill Ring which gives your Homing Attack more range. When you finally get the Ring Saver move, be sure to equip it right away—it reduces the number of rings you lose when you take damage, a necessity when facing a lot of foes.

Get Technical

Have a skill set prepared for when a mission calls for accurate jumps and tricky maneuvers. As important as it is to include skills like Hard Brake in the set, consider taking out moves such as Turbo Boost and Speed-Up, which would lead to unwieldy speeds.

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World 1: Lost Prologue

The Lost Prologue is a nice place to practice new abilities, but the missions shouldn't present much of a challenge. Come back to get gold medals after you have some real-world experience built up.

World 2: Sand Oasis

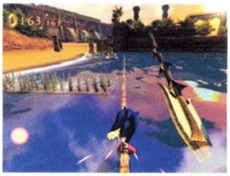
The brightly lit Sand Oasis shouldn't present you with many difficulties—the paths are spacious and technically demanding areas are scarce. However, to medal on all the missions, have your entire bag of tricks at the ready.

Go for the Goal

Find King Shahyar!

KEY SKILLS	
#17	Turbo Boost
#83	Pearl Collector
#98	Quick Grind

The first level of Sand Oasis presents a variety of challenges, especially when you're going for a gold-medal-worthy time. Obstructions love to pop up right in front of you—the Turbo Boost skill will help you recover after bouncing into a pillar or a giant arrow. There are a lot of rails toward the second half of the stage—equip Quick Grind (or its speedier counterpart, Fast Grind) to zip through to the end. Don't worry about collecting pearls—Speed Break won't help you much considering all the trenches and rugged terrain.

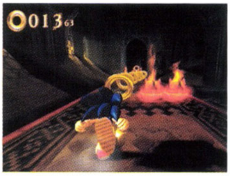


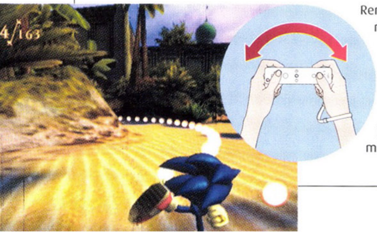
Special Challenge 1

Don't Break the Jar!

KEY SKILLS	
#11	Quick Step
#51	Homing Stability
#60	Quick Slide

As fun as it is just to go as fast as you can, sometimes you need to stay under control, as well. On the first Sand Oasis Special Challenge you must complete the level without breaking any of the jars in your path. It's really easy to go too fast on this wide-open stage—moves like Speed-Up and Charger aren't really necessary. Stick to skills like Quick Step, which will smooth out lateral movement on the ground, and Quick Slide, which helps maintain control before jumping.





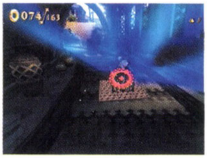
Remember this sequence: right, left, right, right, middle. That's the position of the jars along the blind, curvy corners toward the end of the stage. With so much happening so fast, preset moves are essential.

Special Challenge 2

Break 5 Jars!

KEY SKILLS	
#37	Cancel Absorber
#44	Turbo Jump
#72	Hard Brake

Completing the mission on the second Special Challenge is actually pretty easy—too easy if you're on the hunt for all of the Fire Souls. Several of them are much deeper into the level than is necessary to break five jars, so you'll have to go out of your way to keep some of the targets intact. The farther into the level you go, the more dangerous it gets—use the Hard Brake skill to skid to a stop when an obstacle appears before you.



A couple of the Fire Souls are inside cages. After you break the cage, slam to a stop by pressing the 1 Button. You'll land right on top of the Fire Soul without taking damage from any nearby obstructions.

Rampage!

Defeat 20 Enemies!

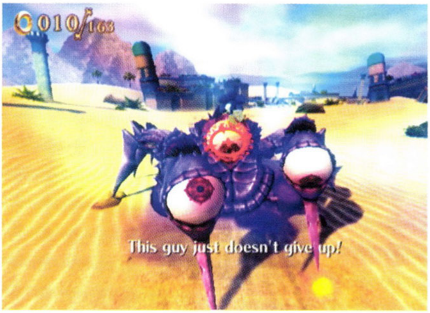
KEY SKILLS	
#47	H-Expand
#51	Homing Stability
#73	Back Step

The Rampage level starts rather simply—enemies appear in your path, just waiting to be stomped on. But later on, they start getting tricky—monsters will appear above spiky balls for a second, then disappear just as quickly. You'll have to slow down and wait for your chance to attack when they reappear. You don't have the luxury of knowing where they'll pop up, so you must be ready to attack at a moment's notice—use the H-Expand skill to extend your homing range and Back Step to return to the enemies you flew by accidentally.

Sand Oasis Boss

Sand Scorpion

The Sand Scorpion isn't terribly difficult to defeat, but getting a gold-medal time is a challenge. One key tactic is to not try anything foolish until you can damage the scorpion; just stay on the ground and keep dodging its missiles. When the big beast slows down to attack, that's your chance. Target the closest eye, then use successive Homing Attacks to reach the eye on the Sand Scorpion's back. When the monster turns around, wait for the eye to detach, then hit it as many times as possible.



World 3: Dinosaur Jungle

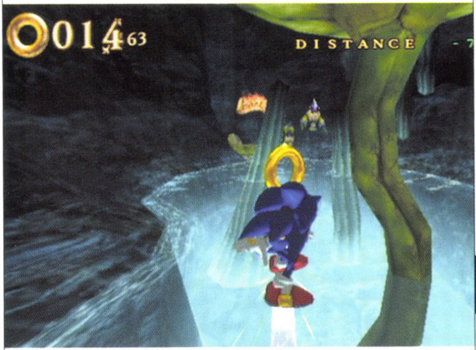
Whether it's outrunning packs of dinosaurs or riding logs down treacherous waters, Dinosaur Jungle will keep you on the move. Look for branching paths: virtually every mission will present options for which way to go.

Head to Head

Beat Uhu to the Goal!

KEY SKILLS	
#76	Balance
#88	Mini-Turbo
#98	Quick Grind

Don't be surprised if Uhu whips you the first few times through this challenging course; despite being one of the earliest stages, it's as tough as it gets. You can help yourself out right from the start by equipping the Mini-Turbo skill—it's easy to use and will give you a nice head start every time. Once you delve into the tunnel, look for rings floating in a row in midair—you'll likely find an invisible rail to grind. Once you know when and where you can hop on and off the hidden paths, you'll be showing Uhu your backside the whole way.

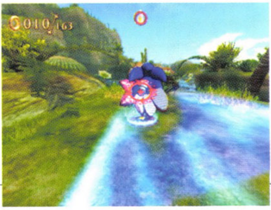


Stealth Attack

Don't Defeat Enemies!?

KEY SKILLS	
#55	Quick Jump
#75	Ring Saver
#76	Balance

Once you get the hang of attacking enemies, it can be difficult to not stomp them when they're in your way. On this level in particular, the enemies love to camp out along narrow paths (like a dinosaur's spine). If you can't get around an enemy, most of the time your only resort is to leap over it. Use the Quick Jump skill to vault over your foes. Later in the game you'll be able to turn off your Homing Attack ability, allowing you to dash over enemies without targeting them accidentally.



Unless you're seeking Fire Souls, don't bother trying to hit the button under the flower monster toward the beginning of the level.

Special Challenge 1

Smash 5 Genie Eggs!

KEY SKILLS	
#41	Fire Gaze
#47	H-Expand
#74	Fire Step

Telling Sonic not to go so fast is like telling the sun not to come up in the east—that's just what he does. Sometimes, though, you gotta take it down a notch. The Genie Eggs are easy to breeze by if you're going at full pace; leave your top-speed skills like All-Rounder at home. Focus on good aerial skills like H-Expand and Homing Stability to target the Genie Eggs from a greater distance. The Fire Gaze skill is particularly helpful—you'll crash into a Genie Egg and stop in your tracks, leaving you ready to prepare your next move.

Special Challenge 2

Get the Pterosaur Egg!

KEY SKILLS	
#28	Soul Absorber
#79	Soul Armor
#83	Pearl Collector

Pterosaur Eggs are really fragile—the slightest bump will shatter them. So you gotta protect your goods. The best defense against hazardous passages and waves of enemies is Time Break—the ability to slow down time. Unfortunately, Time Break saps your Soul Gauge energy quickly. The Soul Absorber skill is essential—every time you land from a jump, your Soul Gauge goes up. Equip skills that make it easier to keep the Soul Gauge full, such as Pearl Collector and Soul Armor. Then spend the rest of your points on skills like Hard Brake and Back Step that help you avoid making scrambled dino.

World 4: Evil Foundry

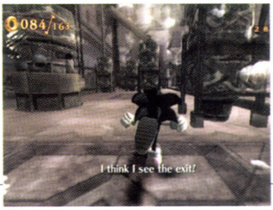
The Evil Foundry is a safety inspector's nightmare. Magma flows throughout the facility, but you have plenty of other worries—mechanical titans, hedgehog-crushing pistons, and deadly pits, to name a few.

Beat the Clock!

Find the Exit in Time!

KEY SKILLS	
#28	Soul Absorber
#84	S-Pearl Collector
#89	Rocket Start

There are quite a few rails along this course, but most of them are too short to be of much use. Instead, concentrate on collecting pearls and use your Speed Break when the coast is clear. Speed Break will also knock out the smattering of enemies you'll encounter. Stay on pace with the Skimmer skill—you'll lose less speed when you're preparing a Charge Jump.



Just before you reach the goal, you'll find a jumble of short pillars. Save some of your Soul Gauge and activate Time Break to help weave between the tightly placed obstacles.

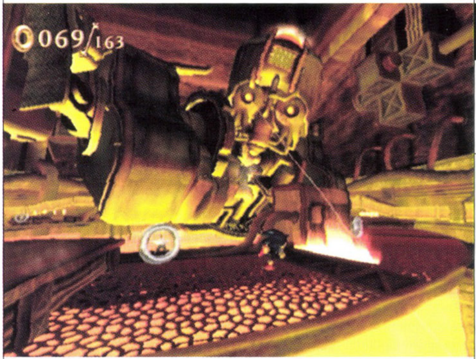
Collect Rings
Collect 99 Rings!

KEY SKILLS	
#12	Quick High Step
#84	S-Pearl Collector
#99	Fast Grind

When you begin this course, it might seem difficult to even find 99 rings, and nearly impossible to hold onto them. If you stick it out, you'll find plenty of rings toward the end of the stage. But if you wait you'll never snag a gold medal. Take your time and memorize the order of obstacles and the positions of enemies. However, if you haven't picked up 99 rings before the end of the stage, look around for a Fire Soul just before you cross the finish line.

Evil Foundry Boss
Ifrit Golem

The Ifrit Golem loves the soothing warmth of molten lava. Hedgehogs don't. Attack the mechanical monster's hands to force him to expose his vulnerable head, but do so when they rest upon higher ground; otherwise you'll find yourself without a platform when he exposes his weak spot. Be sure to equip the Back Step skill for when he throws explosive barrels at you—you'll appreciate the added maneuverability. His most powerful attack is the laser beam he shoots from his eye—avoid it at all costs.



World 5: Levitated Ruin

Situated high above the clouds, the Levitated Ruin is a collection of ancient formations in the sky. The missions here require both extraordinary speed and precise control. And whatever you do, don't look down.

Rampage!
Defeat 1 Enemy!

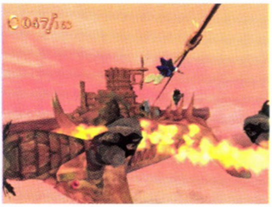
KEY SKILLS	
#47	H-Expand
#73	Back Step
#89	Rocket Start

By far the shortest level in the game, this one showcases a seldom-used maneuver. To hit the lone enemy in the distance, you must swing on an enormous rope. Get as much altitude as possible by shaking the Wii remote vigorously, then launch toward the foe. Wait until you can target it, then pick it out of the sky. If you're really fast, you can grab two Fire Souls during the descent. The third Fire Soul is behind where you begin the level—run backward until you snag the well-hidden object.

Special Challenge 1
Open Sinbad's Cage!

KEY SKILLS	
#37	Cancel Absorber
#45	Boost Jump
#74	Fire Step

Knuckles' . . . er, Sinbad's cage is fastened by four powerful locks. You'll have to ascend four towers and throw a switch on top of each to bust him out. The Jump Cancel move will come in handy frequently on this level—you'll spend a lot of time jumping from ledge to ledge, only to find yourself on a collision course toward a giant, spiked ball. The Fire Step skill will be useful against enemies that have a nasty habit of showing up right behind you outside the castle walls.



You'll need to ride ziplines from one tower to the next. Remembering the order of enemy attacks will help you more than any skill would along these dangerous rides.

World 6: Pirate Storm

The dark and dreary island appears totally inhospitable—the perfect place for sinister pirates to hide. With the amount of firepower they'll throw at you, you'll be wishing you'd stayed lost at sea.

Go for the Goal!
Follow the Pirates!

KEY SKILLS	
#34	Cancel Dash
#58	Volcano Slider
#76	Balance

This incredibly long first mission will send you across ornate pirate ships, through murky caves, and over giant waves. Taking damage on this stage is unavoidable; on levels like these, the best you can do is minimize the impact with skills like Balance. Use the Volcano Slider skill on ground-based enemies to clear a path and prepare for your next jump at the same time.

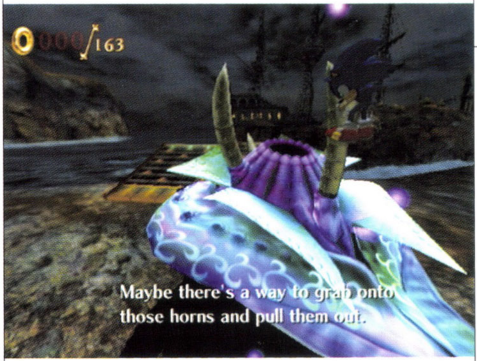
Hands Off!
Finish with 0 RIngs!

KEY SKILLS	
#38	Cancel Assimilator
#48	H-High Expand
#72	Hard Brake

For about 95% of the stage, you can grab all the rings you desire. You'll want them when you face all of the enemies and deadly obstructions. As soon as you sense that you're near the end, take a few intentional hits to offload any rings. Then the real fun begins. A few small platforms stand tall over what appears to be a sea of rings; carefully jump toward a platform then slam on your brakes as soon as you alight. Acceleration is your enemy—unequip skills like Landing Dash and Cancel Dash.

Pirate Storm Boss
Captain Bemoth

For the most part, you can go as fast as you like in pursuit of the retreating Captain Bemoth. When you catch up to him, jump in the air and target one of his horns. When you latch on, shake the Wii remote to yank the appendage from his soft head. Be careful—if you take too long, he'll load up a ball of electricity and zap you off his back. His attacks are easy to dodge—just jump over the tidal waves he hurls your way occasionally. The fewer times you need to climb on his back, the more likely you'll finish with a gold medal.



Maybe there's a way to grab onto those horns and pull them out.

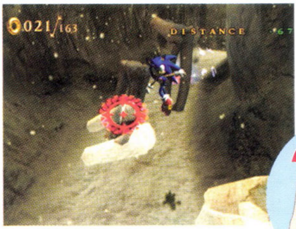
World 7: Skeleton Dome

The remains of immense beasts are scattered all over the exterior of the Skeleton King's domain. Fortunately, the inside is much neater. Unfortunately, the beasts are still alive, and don't take kindly to you treading on their turf.

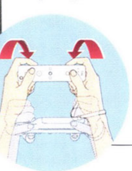
Head to Head
Beat Uhu to the Goal!

KEY SKILLS	
#45	Boost Jump
#52	Homing Balance
#74	Fire Step

You'll spend most of your time well above the course as you bust a new path through the crumbling bones. The Homing Balance skill is critical for quickly hopping from one target to the next. As odd as it sounds, the Fire Step skill is valuable for one particular maneuver on this mission: When you get to the end of the level, a giant wall will block your path. You have to defeat a monster that appears right behind you to make the wall disappear. With the Fire Step, all you need to do is hop backward to smash into the foe and take down the wall.



Most of the bones that protrude from the cliff faces are breakable—just keep smashing away to create your own passage.



Collect Rings
Collect 50 Rings!

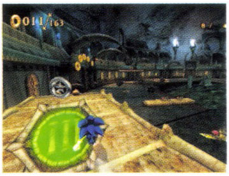
KEY SKILLS	
#32	Fire Tackle
#57	Aegis Slider
#86	Ring Bonus

If you're having trouble collecting 50 rings early in this level, don't sweat it—just make sure you don't go in the first warp portal in a particular area; it will take you to the exit. Be careful—the deeper into the dungeon you get, the more difficult the rooms become. Give yourself a a five-ring head start with the Ring Bonus—a little help goes a long way on this difficult mission. Use the Aegis Slider to protect yourself in rooms full of invulnerable skeletons.

Rampage!
Defeat 40 Enemies!

KEY SKILLS	
#18	Rocket Boost
#52	Homing Balance
#90	Warp Dash

Defeating enemies in this open-air dome isn't difficult; finding them is. As you speed around the rim of the expanse, look for floor switches numbered one through five. Hit them in order in one pass around the room to make a bunch of skeletons come alive. Then put the skeletons back into the earth on your next pass. To get a gold medal, find the smoothest route from switch to switch and beat all the enemies in one pass.

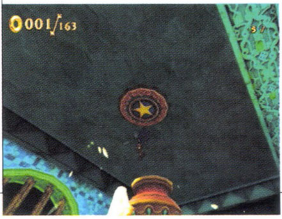


Make a couple of passes to get acquainted with the layout of the room and its hazards before triggering more skeletons.

Rampage!
Defeat 15 Enemies!

KEY SKILLS	
#45	Boost Jump
#55	Quick Jump
#64	Skimmer

The enemies on this stage have a bad habit of disappearing just as you're about to attack them. Show patience and pick them off when you can. Most of the skeletons are indestructible—they'll go down for a moment, then pop right back up. Look for switches that make more enemies show up, as well—the level is short, so you'll need to defeat every foe you come across.



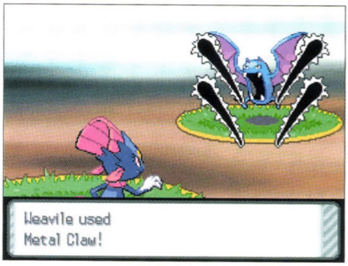
The switches that cause enemies to appear are all over the place, including on the ceiling.

CREATURE FEATURES

7 Big Things You Need to Know about Pokémon Diamond & Pokémon Pearl

Pokémon fever is heating up thanks to the elegant **Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl** coming to DS. Check out seven of the games' most dazzling features.

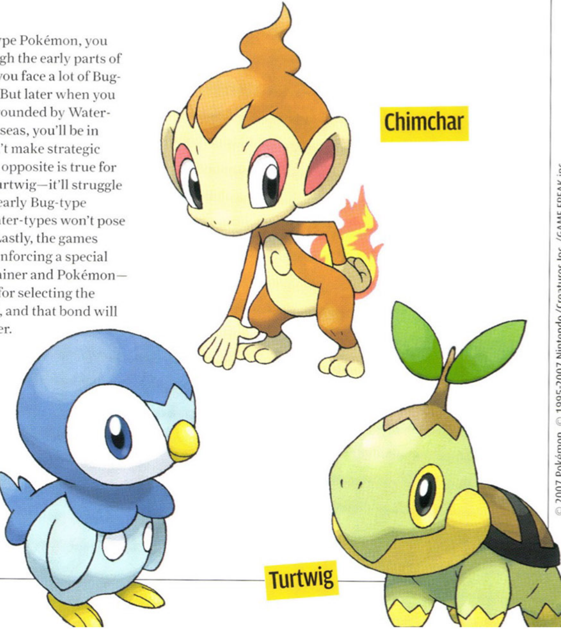
By Chris Shepperd


Weavile used
Metal Claw!

Meet the Starters!

1

Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl continue a Pokémon RPG tradition by having you make one of the most important decisions in the game right away: Picking a Pokémon with which to begin your journey. Three all new Pokémon are yours to choose from—Fire-type Chimchar, Water-type Piplup, and Grass-type Turtwig. You won't be able to catch these Pokémon in the wild; to catch every Pokémon, you'll have to trade with other Trainers to get the two Pokémon you didn't select. The Pokémon you choose can have a big impact on your adventure in several ways. First, the starter Pokémon is relatively strong, making it a good member of your party early on. For example, the Water-type Pokémon Piplup can learn Water Gun very early on; it serves as a strong complement to the moves of the Pokémon you'll find as you begin the story. Second, as Pokémon veterans well know, the strengths and weaknesses of starter Pokémon influence the difficulty of certain portions of the game. For example, if you begin with Chimchar, the starter Fire-type Pokémon, you may breeze through the early parts of the game, where you face a lot of Bug- and Grass-types. But later when you find yourself surrounded by Water-types on the high seas, you'll be in trouble if you don't make strategic adjustments. The opposite is true for the Grass-type Turtwig—it'll struggle against the same early Bug-type Pokémon, but Water-types won't pose any threat at all. Lastly, the games focus heavily on enforcing a special bond between Trainer and Pokémon—you had a reason for selecting the Pokémon you did, and that bond will be with you forever.



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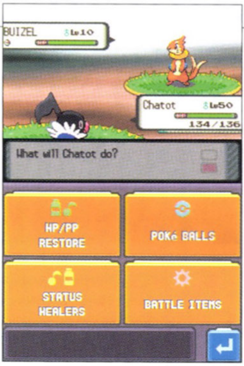
It's Finger-Pointin' Good

2

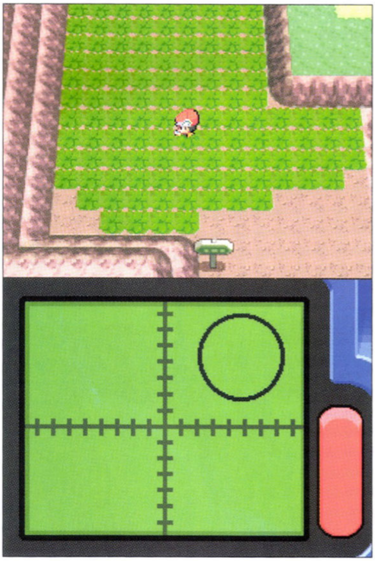
The DS's touch screen has improved on the Pokémon gameplay systems in a number of ways. Battling, in particular, has improved quite a bit thanks to the DS. When you're choosing an attack, touch-screen buttons display standard info—the move name, the move type, and how many PP you have left. The item-selection screen is broken down into categories—Restore Items, Status Healers, Battle Items, and Poké Balls—and all the items are clearly organized within each section. Don't worry, Pokémon vets—the changes don't amount to actual differences in how battles play out, but they will help manage the bounty of new items, Pokémon, and moves better than ever before. If you prefer to use the Control Pad and buttons to select your next move, you can; it's your choice.

Outside of battle, the touch screen plays other huge roles. While you're out exploring the many corners of Sinnoh, the lower screen accesses your Pokétch. You can also use the stylus to interact with the Pokédex. The list of Pokémon appears on the top screen; to scroll through the list, you spin a wheel that looks like a giant Poké Ball on the right side of the screen. Once you've found the Pokémon you're looking for, you can examine all of its traits, including its size, where it can be found, and the sound of its cry. These are just a couple of the roles the touch screen serves—we'll touch on more in future coverage.

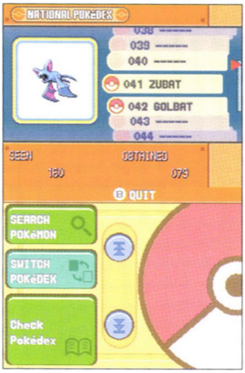


What will Chatot do?

No more excuses: descriptive buttons make selecting the wrong move or item virtually impossible.



No matter which function of the Pokétch you're using, your stylus is all you need to get the information you seek.



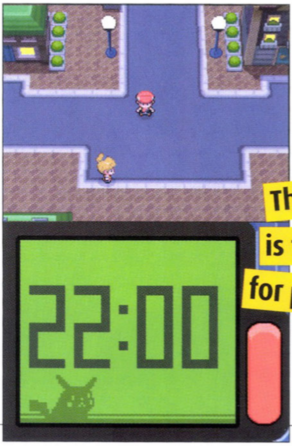
You'll quickly get all the pertinent information about a Pokémon via the touch-screen-friendly Pokédex.

From Dawn 'til Dusk

3

When Pokémon Gold and Silver introduced a real-time clock, Pokémon fans absolutely loved it. It seemed destined to become a staple of Pokémon games. But when Ruby and Sapphire came around, the feature disappeared. Now time has come again—Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl reintroduce the system in a big way.

A 24-hour period is divided into five phases: morning, day, evening, and night, and late night. Certain Pokémon are most likely to appear during certain phases; a Pokémon might show up more often in a particular location in the morning than at any other time, for example. A Pokémon's area info in the Pokédex depicts a sun on the bottom screen—drag it across a skylike timeline to see where the Pokémon will appear and at what times.



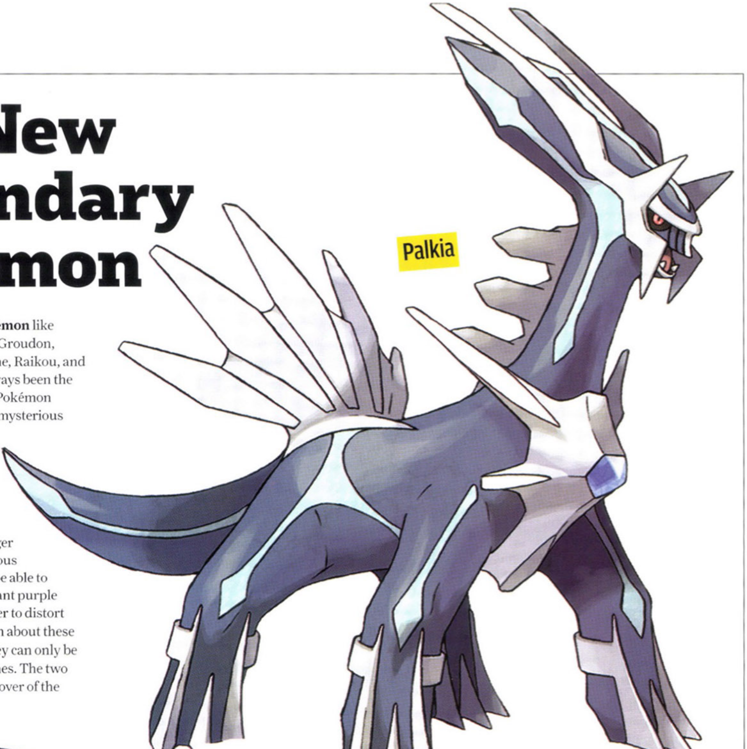
As evening approaches, the streetlights in the city will turn on to light your way.

The night time is the right time for playing Pokémon!

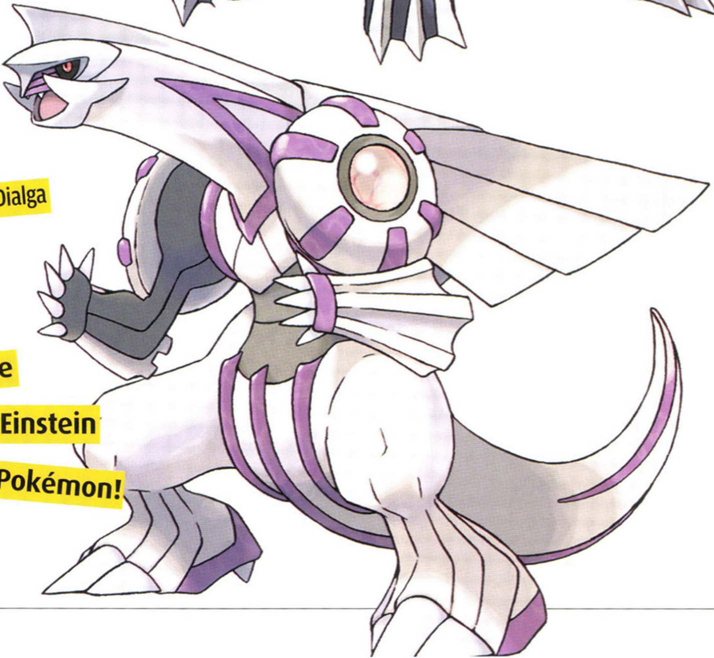
The New Legendary Pokémon

4

Legendary Pokémon like Lugia, Ho-oh, Groudon, Kyogre, Suicune, Raikou, and Entei have always been the brass ring for Pokémon Trainers. These mysterious creatures are often one-of-a-kind, and very powerful—catching them requires everything you know about raising and battling Pokémon. In the DS titles, the Legendaries are larger than life—Dialga is an enormous blue Pokémon that is said to be able to manipulate time, while the giant purple Palkia is said to have the power to distort space. Not much else is known about these rare Pokémon, except that they can only be caught in their respective games. The two Pokémon will also grace the cover of the game cases.



Palkia



Dialga

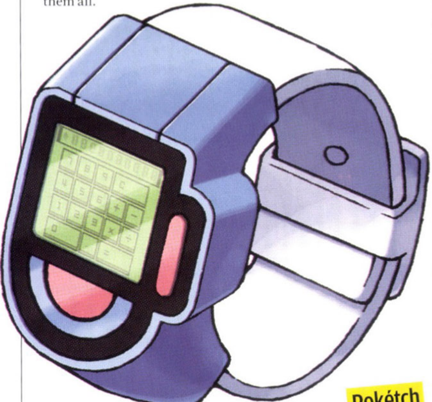
Warp space and time? Einstein would love Pokémon!

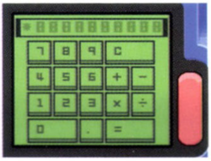
It's All on the Wrist

5

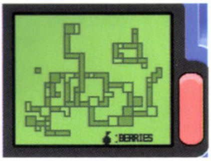
When you're out exploring the many corners of Sinnoh, the lower screen accesses your Pokétch, a multifunction tool that Trainers will find indispensable. If you're a male Trainer, the Pokétch will be blue; if you're a female, the Pokétch will be pink.

The Pokétch is basically a small computer that stores a variety of miniature applications. When you start out, the Pokétch is limited to a handful of uses—it's a watch, a pedometer, a Pokémon-status checker, and a calculator. As you progress through the game, you'll find more applications, such as a note pad and item finder. Eventually the Pokétch will include a program that keeps track of the Pokémon you've left with the Pokémon Day Care and a berry monitor that shows where you can find fruit-bearing trees. The Pokétch is controlled entirely on the touch screen—big buttons allow you to handle most functions without even using the stylus. There are 20 applications in total, but they won't just show up in your Pokétch as you progress through your journey—you'll have to do some serious footwork to find them all.

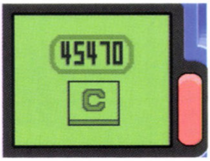

Pokétch



Special minigames require you to do some big-time calculations.



There are about a bazillion berry trees in Sinnoh. Use the Pokétch to keep track of them all.

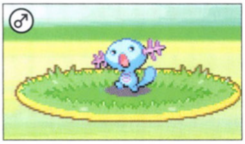


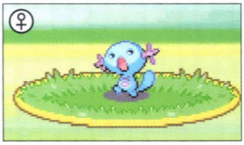
The pedometer is a staple of Pokémon games. Now you'll be able to see in real time how many steps you've taken.

You've Got Male (or Female!)

6

Gender has long been a part of the Pokémon series, but until now male and female Pokémon have looked the same. Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl introduces visual differences for Pokémon depending on their gender. Even the most well-known Pokémon, such as Pikachu, are getting a graphical update. There are still some Pokémon that look the same in both genders, some that can be only male or female, and some (particularly the Legendaries) that don't have a gender at all. Gender still has a central role in breeding Pokémon, and all the aspects still apply to gender—moves such as Attract that are affected by the Pokémon's gender still behave in the same way.



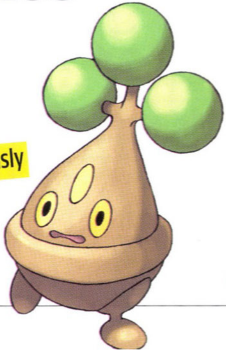


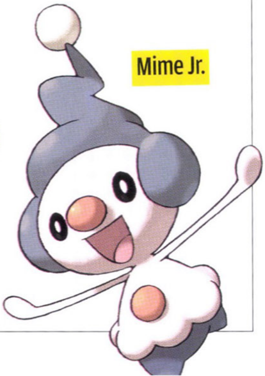
Check out the antlers on Wooper—the male has more horns than the female. The gender differences for some Pokémon are evident and some are more subtle.

Split the Difference

7

For the most part, whether you play one game or the other, the gameplay will be the same. But there are several differences between the two versions. Most importantly, there are a handful of Pokémon that are version-exclusive. For example, if you're looking to complete your Pokédex in Pokémon Diamond, you'll have to trade Pokémon with a Pokémon Pearl game. The full list of version-exclusive Pokémon hasn't yet been announced, but Palkia and Dialga are two examples. Other Pokémon may be rare in one version of the game, such as Mime Jr., Mr. Mime's pre-evolved form, which is more commonly found in Pokémon Pearl than in Pokémon Diamond. The opposite is true for Bonsly, the pre-evolved version of Sudowoodo, which is easier to catch in Pokémon Diamond.


Bonsly

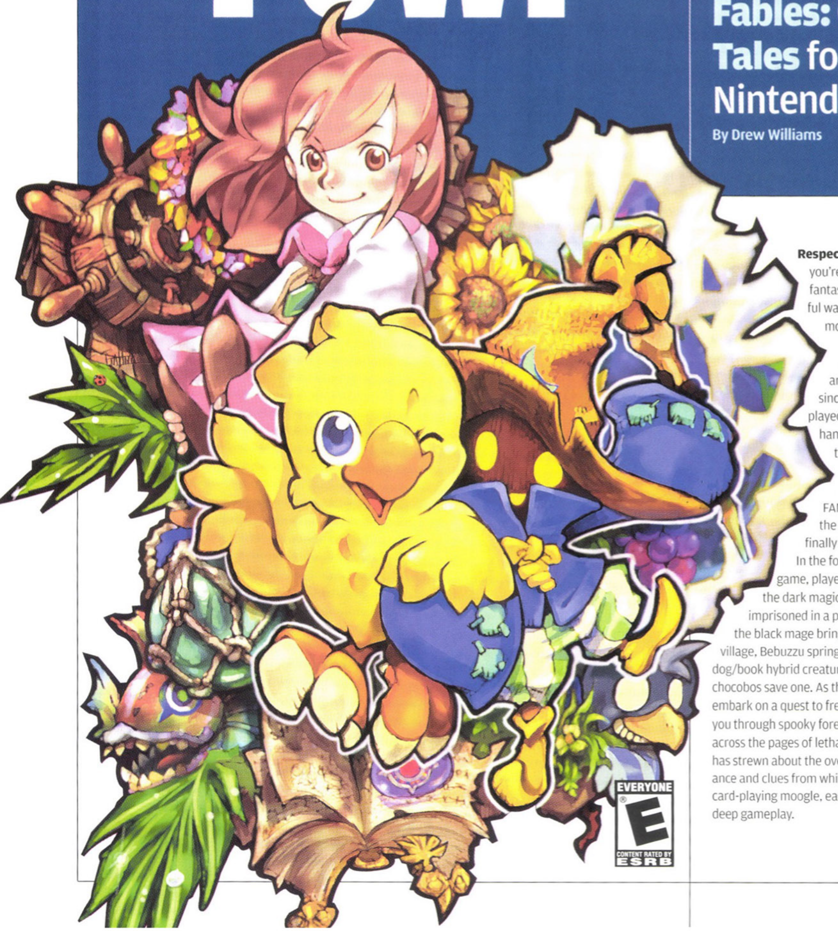

Mime Jr.

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

Pop-Up Fowl

The feathered steeds of the FINAL FANTASY universe get a storybook adventure of their own in **FINAL FANTASY Fables: Chocobo Tales** for Nintendo DS.

By Drew Williams



Respect is slow in coming when you're a goofy, flightless bird in a fantasy universe filled with powerful warriors, airships and terrifying monsters. Chocobos have provided reliable, random-battle-free transportation to androgynous protagonists since FINAL FANTASY II, but have played a starring role in only a handful of games—and even then they had to share the spotlight with other, more-popular characters. With FINAL FANTASY Fables Chocobo Tales, the long-suffering species will finally get that monkey off its back.

In the forthcoming Nintendo DS game, players must save the world from the dark magic of Bebuzzu, an evil entity imprisoned in a pop-up book. When Chroma the black mage brings the book to the chocobo village, Bebuzzu springs to life—in the form of a dog/book hybrid creature—and slurps up all the chocobos save one. As the lone chocobo hero, you'll embark on a quest to free your friends that will take you through spooky forests, inside firey volcanos and across the pages of lethal pop-up books that Bebuzzu has strewn about the overworld. Along the way, guidance and clues from white mage Shiroma and Mog, a card-playing moogle, ease you into the surprisingly deep gameplay.

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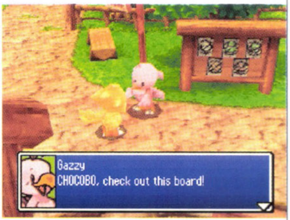
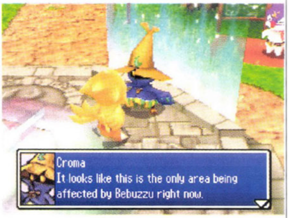


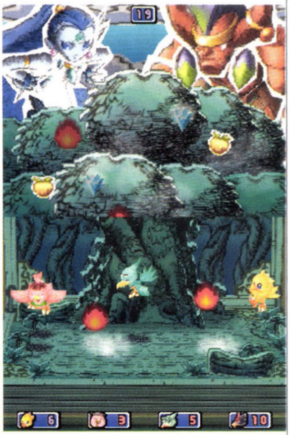
Gazzy
CHOCOBO, check out this board!

The board has pictures of the chocobos who went missing. They were going to put them on milk cartons, but they couldn't find any cows.



Croma
It looks like this is the only area being affected by Bebuzzu right now.

Optimism can be dangerous when you're dealing with an evil, soul-sucking entity that's trapped inside an enchanted storybook.



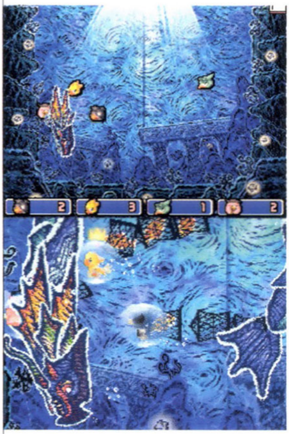
You'll have to dodge fireballs and icicles hurled by malevolent dieties, but, man, those apples sure are crispy and delicious.

Travel with Stylus

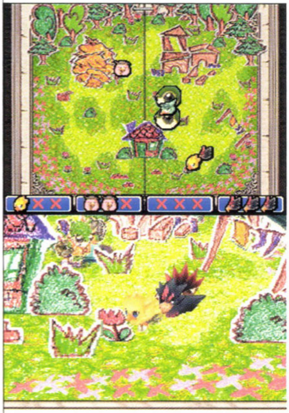
Chocobo Tales is designed to be played entirely with the touch screen, and although you can instead use the control pad and various buttons for most functions, you'll find the game flows best when you stick with the stylus. While in the overworld, the action unfolds on the touch screen and the top screen shows your position on the map grid. You can pull your chocobo around the overworld by holding the stylus on the touch screen in the direction you want to move and you can interact with characters and objects by tapping them. The fixed-camera 3-D perspective—coupled with the always-there detailed map—makes it extremely easy to find the next objective and keep the game moving. When you reach an enchanted pop-up book, the action shifts to a point-and-click menu interface that allows you to access minigames and unlockable content within the book. The minigames and microgames—simple games accessed throughout the overworld—offer a clever assortment of touch-screen controls to keep you on your toes.

Book Tour

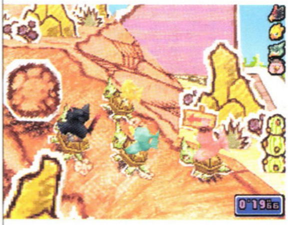
The means to defeat Bebuzzu can be found within the pop-up books that dot the landscape—each one contains a minigame that you need to defeat at progressive difficulty levels to trigger events in the overworld. Minigame victories are also rewarded with new pop-up duel cards that you'll need to defeat enemies (for more on duels see "Cut Out for Card Duels" on page 80). Each book has a theme that's loosely based on a famous myth or fairy tale. For example, *Titan and the Beanstalk* is based on some obscure folk tale about beans or something. In Volume 1 of the tale, you propel your chocobo to the top of the beanstalk by drawing bouncy leaves on the touch screen. In Volume 2, found elsewhere in the overworld, you need to create leaves to guide your descent from the top. Most minigames have a battle mode that involves head-to-head competition against jailbirds and other minions of Bebuzzu and a trial mode in which you race the clock to achieve the best score. Each minigame has seven secrets to unlock, so you can squeeze a substantial amount of gameplay out of a single volume.



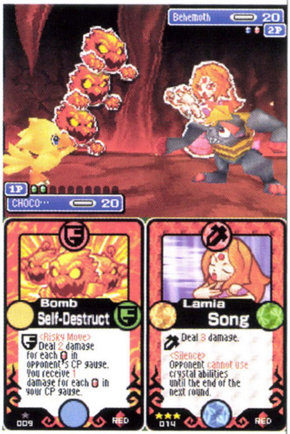
We don't want to burst your bubble, but you are not the king of the chocobos.



Don't let the Crayola environments mislead you—the minigames can be tough.



Slow and steady wins the race— and avoids being crushed by large paper boulders.

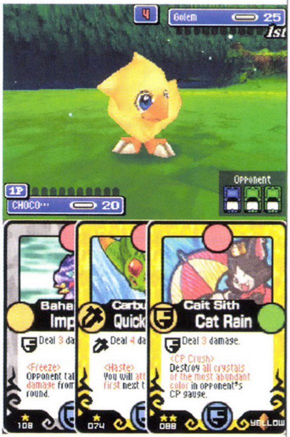

Behemoth 20
2P
1P
CHOCO··· 20
Bomb
Self-Destruct
Lamia
Song
009
RED
014
RED

<Risky Move>
Deal 2 damage for each in opponent's CP gauge. You receive 1 damage for each in your CP gauge.

Deal 3 damage.

<Silence>
Opponent cannot use crystal abilities until the end of the next round.

The Lamia card is potentially more powerful than the Bomb card, but its attack will fail.


4
Golem 25
1st
1P
CHOCO··· 20
Opponent
Baha
Imp
Carbu
Quick
Cait Sith
Cat Rain
108
074
088
YELLOW

Deal 3 da

<Freeze>
Opponent ta damage from round.

Deal 4 da

<Haste>
You will att first next t

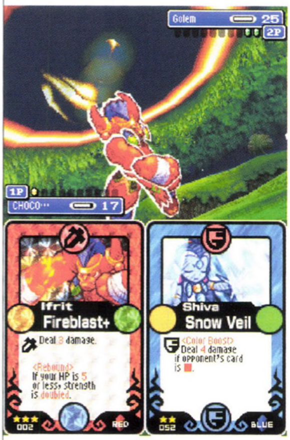
Deal 3 damage.

<CP Crush>
Destroy all crystals of the most abundant color in opponent's CP gauge.

At the start of each duel, you'll be dealt three cards at random from your 15-card deck.

Cut Out for Card Duels

The pop-up dueling system in Chocobo Tales offers a new take on card battles that is simple enough to learn on the fly, but also deep enough to satisfy veterans of other card games. You pick up cards by playing minigames and microgames within the pop-up books, then build decks to use in overworld boss battles. During a duel, each character selects a card from a hand of three cards dealt randomly from their 15-card decks. To activate a card for battle, you flick the card from the touch screen up to the top screen, where the paper cut-out monster on the card appears in a flash of light. After your opponent responds in kind, you trade attacks determined by the data on your respective cards. Each card has four color-coded "magical zones" that contain an attack icon, a guard icon, or nothing. If your card's attack icon corresponds to an empty zone on your opponent's card, then your attack will be successful and you'll chip away your enemy's hit points (HP). If the attack icon corresponds to a guard icon on your opponent's card, your attack will fail; if two attack icons match up, the target will receive half the possible damage. There is a variety of "status" attacks that specific cards can inflict (like burning or poisoning the opponent) and special crystal abilities on certain cards that require you to accumulate crystal points during the duel. When either opponent runs out of HP, the duel ends.

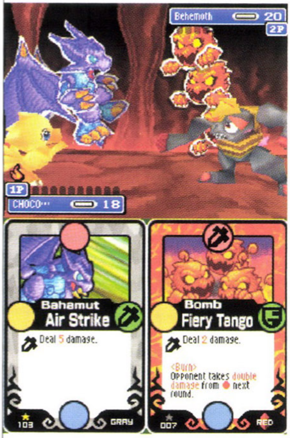

Golem 25
2P
1P
CHOCO··· 17
Ifrit
Fireblast+
Shiva
Snow Veil
002
RED
052
BLUE

Deal 3 damage.

<Rebound>
If your HP is 5 or less, strength is doubled.

<Color Boost>
Deal 4 damage if opponent's card is 🟥.

Attacks are shown using state-of-the-art, paper-cutout animation.

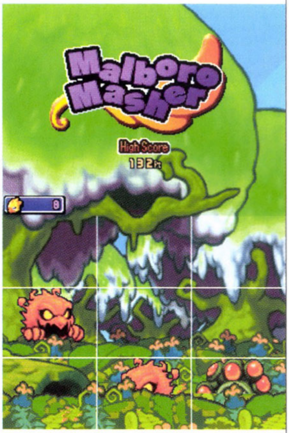

Behemoth 20
2P
1P
CHOCO··· 18
Bahamut
Air Strike
Bomb
Fiery Tango
103
GRAY
007
RED

Deal 5 damage.

Deal 2 damage.

<Burn>
Opponent takes double damage from ● next round.

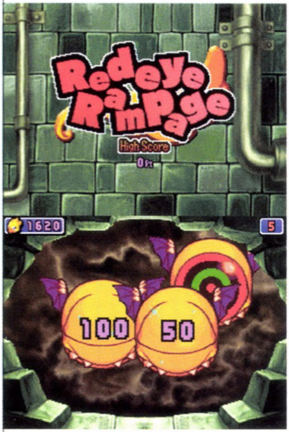
This Bomb card is about to lay the smack down on Bahamut, but you can't watch because it's just a still photo in a magazine.



Yes, two of those things are not malboros, and you shouldn't mash them. Good eye.

When Minigames Are Micro

The storybook minigames are essential to defeating Bebuzzu, but microgames are a welcome diversion from that monumental task. You can access them in a variety of places in the overworld—from stone relics by the side of a road to an arcade cabinet in a village store. As you might expect, microgames tend to be shorter than minigames, but they tend to be more difficult, too. In each game, you have a chance to win a silver or gold medal if you reach predetermined performance benchmarks. For each medal you win, you'll be awarded a pop-up duel card: a mediocre card for a silver and a rare, powerful card for a gold. Earning golds can be tough at times. For example, in the Job Juggler minigame—a matching game that requires you to correctly identify characters as members of the 22 job classes—it's challenging to get a silver and outrageously difficult to get a gold. All the games keep track of your high scores, so you will be forever reminded of your ineptitude.



If you decide to call a plumber about this problem, make sure he has good aim.

61.97
399.73
50

Chocobos can fly? They were totally holding out on those dudes in FINAL FANTASY X.

You Never Know Who Will Pop Up

Chocobo Tales should keep you entertained long after you've completed its story mode—thanks to a variety of multiplayer and Wi-Fi options. The multicard multiplayer mode allows you to go head-to-head with another card shark in a pop-up duel or compete against up to four players in the battle mode of the minigames. Wi-Fi mode lets you compete against pop-up duelists from all over the world, or you can fill your roster with up to 20 friend codes if you prefer more-familiar foes. If you have DS-owning friends who don't own the game, they can download microgames to try out.

Not that you'll get through the story mode all that quickly—the characters may be small and cute, but the adventure is not. Fans of the series will find that old friends and enemies will pop up in the strangest places. There are loads of surprises in store for you when Chocobo Tales hits store shelves in April.

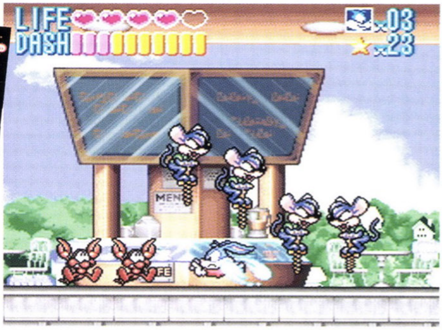
I'm off to pimp my new book on Oprah!!

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BUSTER BUSTS LOOSE!

They're tiny, they're toony, they're all a little loony, and they starred in one of the most overlooked platformers on the SNES.

Tiny Toon Adventures
Buster
Busts Loose!
Nintendo
It's time to party Buster style in a game that's more fun than a rabbit oughta have!
KONAMI
SUPER NINTENDO
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Platform: **SNES**
Developer: **Konami**
Publisher: **Konami**
Release Date: **February 1993**
Covered in Issues: **46, 50, 100**
Tiny Toon TV Episodes: **99**



Everybody's familiar with Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and the Tasmanian Devil, but in 1990 Warner Bros. introduced the world to a new generation of wacky cartoon critters with the animated TV show *Tiny Toon Adventures*. Characters like Buster Bunny, Plucky Duck, and Dizzy Devil were the spiritual successors to the *Looney Tunes* crew, and to go along with their comedic antics, Konami released several video games, the best of which is arguably Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster Busts Loose! for the Super NES.

At first glance Buster Busts Loose! resembles other top-tier platformers of its era. Players took control of Buster Bunny through six increasingly challenging stages filled with genre mainstays like bottomless pits, moving platforms, springboards, collectible tokens, and plenty of enemies (which Buster could vanquish with his punishing dropkick). But what elevated the game to the next level was the inclusion of an additional mechanic: a limited gauge-based dash ability. Not only did dashing let Buster run faster, jump higher, and plow over enemies, but it also let him run straight up walls, which allowed for some amazingly creative stage design, as exemplified by the train stage (in which you have to dash across mountains and canyons to catch up with the train after it enters a tunnel) and a vertical ascent through a collapsing temple in the sky. The inclusion of the simple but brilliantly implemented ability gives the game a feel similar to those created by renowned developer Treasure.

Additionally, Buster Busts Loose! benefited from a highly imaginative selection of levels. Instead of utilizing the typical jungle, fire, and ice worlds, the environments were based on themes such as Acme Looniversity (the Toons' school), a haunted house, the Old West, and outer space. One level even chucked the platforming formula out the window and replaced it with a side-scrolling football game. The same tongue-in-cheek humor that the TV series was known for permeated each stage, and the entire production looked and sounded great thanks to colorful graphics, animation befitting the cartoon license, and a soundtrack that offered level-appropriate remixes of the catchy *Tiny Toon Adventures* theme song.

Only time will tell if the Tiny Toons have the longevity of their cartoon forefathers, but at the very least Buster Bunny's SNES adventure should go down in history as a true classic.
—**Chris H.**

Buster's a wascally wabbit if there ever was one.

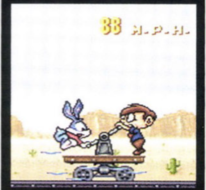
Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.
pulse@nintendopower.com

Spin, eat, spin, eat, spin, eat!

IN GOOD FUN

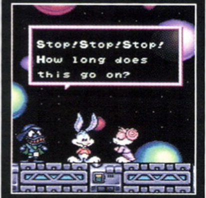
In the *Tiny Toon Adventures* show, nothing was sacred. Anything and anybody could be the subject of parody, from Tom Cruise (who was spoofed in the form of "Tom Snooze") to Arnold Schwarzenegger (who was the basis for the character Arnold the pit bull). Buster Busts Loose! shared the same philosophy—it, too, featured pop-culture parody interspersed amongst its action.

88 MPH



During the finale of the Old West stage, the only way for Buster and rival Montana Max to escape the train is on a pump-powered handcar. When the duo raises the handcar's speed to 88 MPH (à la the time machine in *Back to the Future*), they blast off to the next level.

THE SPACE OPERA


Stop!Stop!Stop!
How long does
this go on?

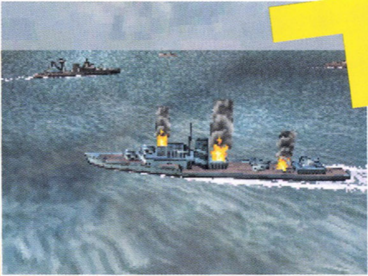
The sixth and final stage of the game was partially a parody of *Star Wars*, with Buster assuming the role of a "knight of honor." Buster didn't get a lightsaber, but his female costar, Babs Bunny, was recast as Princess Babs (complete with cinnamon-roll hair), and Plucky Duck got a Darth Vader makeover.

REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

Speed demon Sonic races to Wii in Sonic and the Secret Rings.

Steel Horizon, Rayman Raving Rabbids (DS), and more.

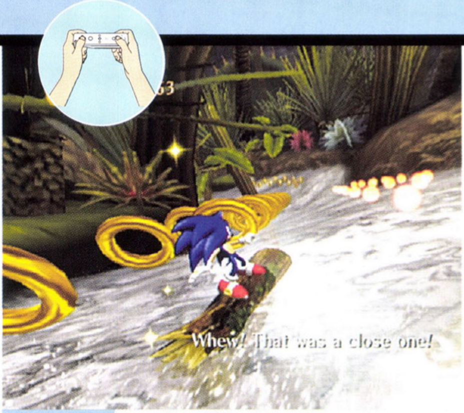


86
New Disney property Spectrobes vies for catch-'em-all status.

86
Wario perpetrates a costumed caper in Master of Disguise.

HI
LASER
MULTIPLE

84
Gradius, Contra, and Rush'n Attack headline a Konami arcade collection on the DS.



SOLID GOLD

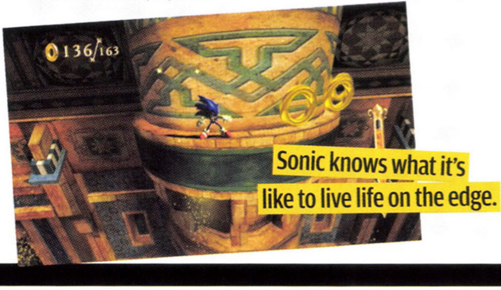
KING OF THE RINGS

SONIC AND THE SECRET RINGS

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONICTEAM
ESRB: EVERYONE

After several attempts to modernize Sonic for the 3-D gaming landscape, Sega has taken a big step back in their approach, and that's a good thing. Sonic and the Secret Rings captures the essence of its 2-D predecessors with pared-down mechanics, a focus on quality level design, and an unbelievable sense of speed. One place they've continued to move forward is in the graphics department: the detailed worlds have amazing art direction, and the game engine never slips frames despite constant motion. The controls are unbelievably intuitive—it's clear that proper implementation of the Wii remote was a key aspect of development. Even as the game progresses and gets more challenging, the remote maintains its precision and doesn't leave you frustrated. There *are* frustrating aspects to the gameplay, however. First, the camera has a habit of being too low and getting stuck briefly behind objects; the low angle does heighten the feeling that you're going kicky fast, but sometimes at a sacrifice. Also, the targeting system has its quirks: sometimes you won't be able to target an enemy or object directly in front of you, but you will be able to target an object that's behind a wall and out of reach. The party mode isn't anything to write home about—the minigames are simple and the overall structure leaves a lot to chance. It's also not very pick-up-and-play friendly—you have to play the story mode extensively to unlock some of the party mode's best features. —CHRIS S.



Sonic knows what it's like to live life on the edge.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT DORMANT SERIES WOULD YOU REVIVE?

Alien Syndrome is making a comeback for Wii (see the feature on page 52). We asked our reviewers what other franchises they'd like to see return.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Sega's Nights is the obvious answer, but if I want to get even more retro, how about Pro Wrestling? Who wouldn't want to see Starman and The Amazon going at it on Wii? Back Brain Kick!

CHRIS SHEPPERD

Okay, so maybe Mike Tyson didn't turn out to be the best cover boy, but Punch-Out! was still a knockout. And Wii Sports has already shown how well boxing works with the Wii.

ANDY MYERS

I'd love to see Kid Niki—the obvious predecessor to Naruto—make a triumphant comeback. They may want to lose the "Radical Ninja" tagline, though.

GEORGE SINFIELD

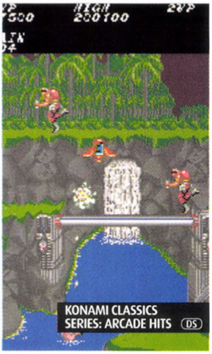
The recent *Casino Royale* film helped reinvent the James Bond franchise. How about a video game revival for Japan's answer to Bond: Duke Togo in Golgo 13?

STEVE THOMASON

I'm going to go a little bit obscure and say Rocket Knight Adventures. This action-platforming gem from Konami was one of my favorite Genesis games, and I'd kill for a new installment on DS.

DREW WILLIAMS

I'd love to see Grim Fandango on the DS, but I think the audio may suffer too much. I'll settle for any Tim Shafer game. Psychonauts 2 on the Wii? Does Tim Shafer qualify as a franchise? Who am I talking to?



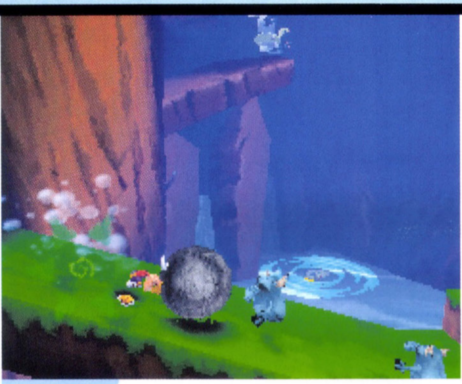
KONAMI CLASSICS SERIES: ARCADE HITS DS

KONAMI CLASSICS SERIES: ARCADE HITS

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI/M2
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Classic game compilations are strangely uncommon on DS, but the handheld's finally getting some significant retro love with this collection of 15 Konami arcade hits. The highlights of the anthology are Contra, Track & Field, Time Pilot, and Gradius, all of which hold up remarkably well considering their age (every title in the collection was originally released between 1981 and 1987); a testament to the timelessness of good game design. Most of the others—Scramble, Pooyan, Roc 'n Rope, Circus Charlie, Basketball, Rainbow Bell (originally called Twin Bee), Shao-Lin's Road, and Rush 'n Attack—are at the very least fun diversions. The only real stinkers in the bunch are Horror Maze (originally called Tutankham), Road Fighter, and Yie Ar Kung-Fu; not a bad ratio. The emulation on all of the titles is rock-solid, and each game even offers authentic dip-switch settings to adjust difficulty, number of lives, etc. (For those of you who have never operated your own arcade, the settings are also available via a more traditional options menu.) There's some nice archival material included as well, such as sales sheets, service manuals, and even photographs of the original arcade circuit boards. Best of all, the game boasts full multiplayer support with a single game card via download play. —STEVE T.



MACROGAME

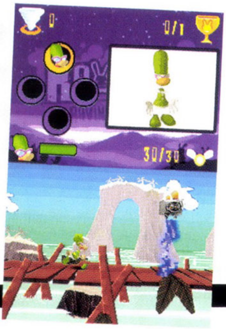
RAVES FOR RAYMAN

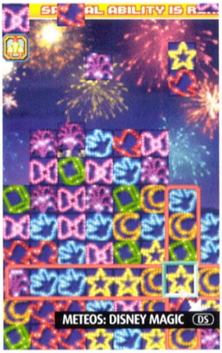
RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS

RATING: 7.0

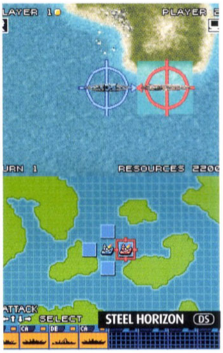
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
ESRB: EVERYONE

After a solid but light minigame workout on Wii, Rayman is back to hopping-and-punching form in the DS version of Raving Rabbids. In an effort to rid the world of a psychotic bunny invasion, Michel Ancel's creation splits time between traditional platforming levels and sections that have him running left to right on his own while you use your stylus to clear the environment. At first, using the Control Pad to switch between Rayman's four costumes (1970s-inspired wigs and suits) to trigger different types of environmental reactions seems like a clumsily executed and wasted step, but after you've gone through several gold-trophy-collecting runs, you'll probably enjoy the addition that the costume changes bring to the game's manic rhythm. The costumes also figure in to puzzle-solving in the more-traditional sections. The puzzles are rarely difficult to solve, but there is a challenge in actually getting Rayman to execute the complex maneuvers that he needs to get past some obstacles. Thankfully, there's a generous smattering of checkpoints and you have an infinite number of lives, so failure to make a long jump (or falling into a pit that looks like it might be a legitimate path) is not much of a setback. The game boasts a non-linear structure that has you choosing levels while navigating a honeycomb-shaped menu, but more often than not there's only one path that you can take at any given time, making level selection more like busywork than a real choice. Like the Rayman Wii release, the DS game is chock-ablock with colorful graphics and a lot of humor, most of which comes from the nutty Rabbids who give us everything from munchkin-voiced renditions of Chic's "Good Times" and Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" on the soundtrack to well-rendered portraits of the Moron Bunnies as unlockable extras. The game is far from perfect, but it fills a niche for those wanting a fun and funny 2-D platformer on the DS. —GEORGE S.





METEOS: DISNEY MAGIC (DS)



STEEL HORIZON (DS)

METEOS: DISNEY MAGIC

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: Q ENTERTAINMENT/ ASPECT/PLATINUMEGG
ESRB: EVERYONE

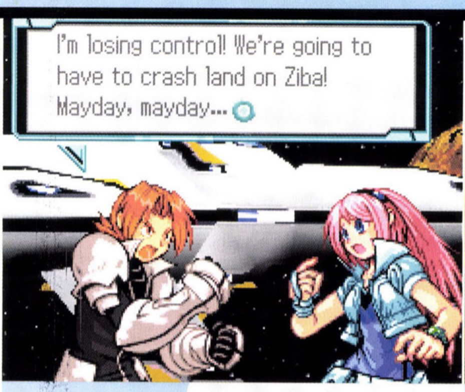
Meteos: Disney Magic does more than provide a Mouseketeer-friendly facelift to one of the DS's best puzzle games; thanks to the ability to move blocks horizontally, the sequel has a thoroughly different dynamic than the original block-launcher. Though the changes mean that Disney Magic isn't quite as strategic or stylish as its predecessor, what it lacks in those areas it makes up for with more variety (different objectives on each level in story mode, new special abilities), intensity (faster gameplay), and accessibility (a more user-friendly interface). The vertically oriented presentation (you hold the DS sideways to play) works wonderfully, and nine different Disney themes—ranging from *The Lion King* to *Pirates of the Caribbean*—look great and add plenty of visual appeal. As always, multiplayer is a blast, but it's a shame there's no Wi-Fi Connection play.
—CHRIS H.

STEEL HORIZON

RATING: 4.5

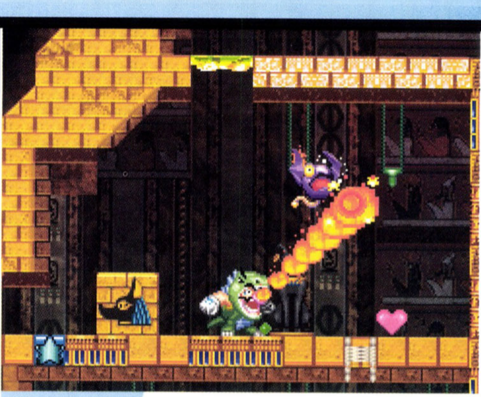
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: CLIMAX
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Military strategy games walk a fine line between precision and immediacy. If you make the game meticulously detailed, the player becomes bogged down in a logistical quagmire and the user interface becomes too complex. Make the action too dramatic, and the battles become shallow and cartoonish—too many important decisions are taken out of the player's hands. Steel Horizon, a WWII naval combat game, attempts to bypass that balancing act by integrating classic turn-based map movement with the urgency of "real-time" battles—and ends up delivering a hollow experience on both counts. The map portion of the game works well enough, but inexplicably fails to take advantage of the touch screen. Moving ships is a tedious process of menu selection and slow grid-hopping. But those real-time battles should jolt you awake after slogging across the map, right? Sadly, no—the combat is largely automatic and bewildering to watch. A sonar display on the touch screen shows the positions of the ships during battle and a third-person view on the top screen shows off all the fireworks when ships begin to trade shells (admittedly, it's entertaining to watch torpedoes launch sideways and into the air from your submarines). You do have limited control over your ships' movement and targeting, but your main task during battles is to cycle through your available vessels and hit the X button to launch "special" attacks to crush the enemy as quickly as possible. In the end, battles are decided by a simple rock-paper-scissors formula—if you have enough of the right type of ships for the enemy you're facing, you'll win. Clever tactics may help you preserve a ship or two, but the battles are usually decided before you fire a shot. The multicard multiplayer mode had the potential to bring some intensity to the experience but the capture-the-flag-style battles are too simplified to justify the purchase of a second game card (or the Herculean task of finding another person who owns Steel Horizon).
—DREW W.



I'm losing control! We're going to have to crash land on Ziba! Mayday, mayday...

GOTTA UNEARTH 'EM ALL



COSTUME BRAWL

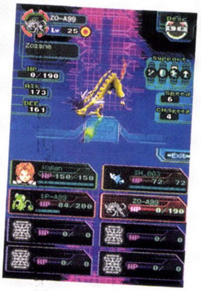
MONSTERS OF ROCK

SPECTROBES

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **BUENA VISTA GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **JUPITER CORPORATION**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If you've grown up with Pokémon, Buena Vista's first original DS property (not based on a movie or cartoon) will strike a familiar chord. Action-adventure Spectrobes has you searching for fossils of ancient creatures, awakening them, raising them, and using them to fight your battles. Clever use of the DS's touch screen makes the process of digging up the old bones and other buried treasure entertaining (if not a little monotonous after several hours spent scouring the game's five planetary surfaces). Once you crack the surface by tapping the screen, thereby partially exposing your find, you use drills and an air blower to work away at the earth and extract the object without damaging it. Applying too much pressure with one of the drills will cause the object to crumble. Awakening Spectrobes requires use of the DS microphone and a strong voice. (If you play in public, you'll raise a few eyebrows as you intone loudly for several seconds at a time to bring the being to life.) After you've done it a few times, the process loses its charm. You can use awakened and evolved creatures to take on the evil Krawl. Even though the player-controlled character, Rallen, has a variety of weapons, he is weak compared to his Spectrobe companions. You don't have direct control over the creatures, but you can tell them when to attack, and build up their power for devastating combos. As you search, fight, and unravel a story that gets to the root of the relationship between the Spectrobes and the Krawl, you unlock three local multiplayer options, plus Wi-Fi options that allow you to upload your stats to a website and use earned points to trade for new content. You can also unlock the ability to collect Spectrobes by way of trading cards that come with the game (place a card over the touch screen and poke the stylus through numbered holes). The game definitely has its roots in the Pokémon world, but provides enough new features to give it its own identity. —**GEORGE S.**



NOT-SO-SMOOTH CRIMINAL

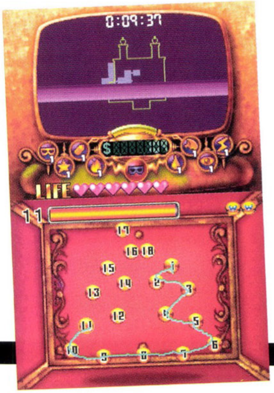
WARIO: MASTER OF DISGUISE

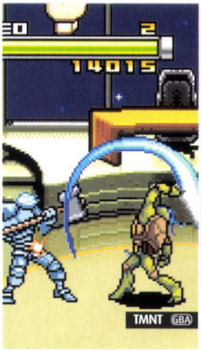
RATING: 6.5

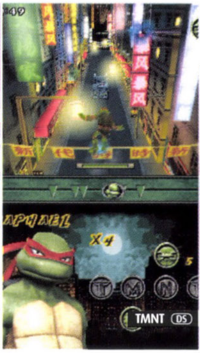
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO/SUZAK**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

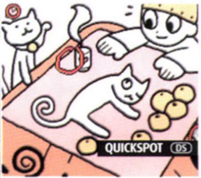
After spending the last few years focused primarily on his software company, Nintendo's pudgy antihero is getting back to his platforming roots with Wario: Master of Disguise. Unfortunately, the mustachioed money-grubber seems to have lost a step. The basic concept behind his puzzle-heavy adventure certainly holds promise—Wario dons a variety of costumes that bestow him with special abilities, from a space suit armed with a high-tech laser pistol to a painter's smock that lets him sketch platforms anywhere on the screen. And the insult-laden exchanges between our flatulent protagonist and his myriad rivals are amusing and well-written. Where things start to unravel is the level design. All of the stages require lots of tedious backtracking (you can reach certain areas only once you've acquired a particular disguise or upgrade), and figuring out what you're supposed to do next is often painfully obtuse. There are a few clever puzzles here and there, but the challenges are pretty unremarkable for the most part. That's especially true of the touch-screen minigames required to unlock each treasure chest; connecting numbered dots to draw a picture and tapping the screen to squash cockroaches are the types of mundane activities that lost their novelty about a month after the DS launched. The other big issue with the game's use of the touch screen is that drawing shapes to change into your various disguises can be frustratingly unreliable.

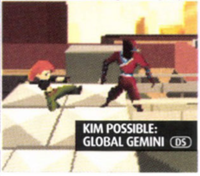
Despite its shortcomings, Master of Disguise manages to deliver a moderately enjoyable platforming romp. The different costumes afford the gameplay some nice variety, and Wario always brings a lot of personality to the proceedings. The big guy deserves better, though, and the DS is home to plenty of superior side-scrollers. —**STEVE T.**











TMNT

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal
ESRB: Everyone 10+

TMNT is a side-scrolling brawler in the classic style of its franchise predecessors; you tackle hordes of bad guys as one of the four turtles, with one of the other turtles ready to help perform special moves. The movie-based title displays solid, responsive mechanics, adequate enemy variety, and detailed graphics. RPG and item-purchasing elements allow you to beef up the characters, but they're a bit ill-conceived—for example, you can buy a weapon before entering a level, but the weapon will break long before you reach a tough section. There are just enough of these elements to make you realize that, properly done, they could've been so much more. Nevertheless, regular gamers and TMNT aficionados alike will enjoy the tight gameplay and quality fan service. —Chris S.

TMNT

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal
ESRB: Everyone 10+

Like EA's Catwoman and Capcom's P.N.03 before it, Ubisoft's DS version of TMNT tackles the challenge of offering characters that have advanced acrobatic abilities by making much of their movement automatic. Instead of allowing you to run freely through the environment, the game corrals your character into small arenas and limits the places that he can jump to. Most of the game is spent watching the characters as they leap dramatically from one glowing dot on the ground to the next. You press a different jump button based on whether the destination is to the left (Y), to the right (A), or directly ahead (X). Some jumping decisions have to be made as soon as you land, or your character will fall into the abyss. The problem is that it can be difficult to determine which jump button you are meant to press if the destination is just slightly off center. The result is that you learn by failing, then memorize jump directions and finally score a perfect run. Success gives you a feeling of accomplishment, but the path is paved with frustration. —George S.

QUICKSPOT

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai
ESRB: Everyone 10+

It may seem like a bit of a stretch to make a full-blown DS title about finding the differences between two nearly identical drawings. And it is. Though Namco Bandai's Quickspot does offer two distinct single-player modes along with multiplayer competition, the concept runs thin pretty quickly. Companion pictures appear on the DS's screens. In the game's Quick Play mode, your task is to circle the area that makes the touch screen's drawing different from the top screen's. The anomaly can be as obvious as the appearance of a large object in the foreground or as subtle as the absence of a soft background element, and luck of the draw seems to determine how noticeable the difference will be. The game boasts 140 picture pairs with 10 possible differences per pair, and a grading system that charts your performance in five categories (again, some obvious and some obscure). —George S.

ALSO THIS MONTH

The biology-experiment-turned-hero of Graffiti Entertainment's **Back to Stone** (GBA) turns monsters into rocks. The concept is strong, but an isometric view makes getting around the crowded environment a chore. . . . Buena Vista brings us **Kim Possible: Global Gemini** (DS), the prolific heroine's latest platforming adventure. While the action unspools on the top screen, you use the touch screen to manage your inventory of eight secret-agent gadgets, including a grappling hook and a very tricky tube of lipstick. The plot has Kim following bad guy Gemini as he attempts to brainwash the world's population, no doubt for dastardly purposes. . . . The D.T.C. of D3PA's **Fossil League D.T.C.** (DS) stands for Dino Tournament Championship. Like Buena Vista's Spectrobes (reviewed this issue), the game has you breeding prehistoric creatures for battle.

Captain N

Captain N
THE
GAME MASTER
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DISC 2
DISC 3
DISC 4

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ON THE Wii
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SONIC SECRETS

MARCH 2007, VOLUME 213
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Link), New Blue (Sonic and the Secret Rings), Better Gaming Through Science (We Create a Gamer), Grease Monkey (Diddy Kong Racing DS), Chairman of the Board (Mario Party 8), Lootin' & Tootin' (Wario: Master of Disguise), Motion Blur (SSX Blur), Sixth Sense (FINAL FANTASY VI ADVANCE), Nintendo Power Awards Nominations 2006, Super Paper Mario, TMNT, Rayman Raving Rabbids, Cake Mania, Pokémon Diamond & Pokémon Pearl, SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS, Wii Play, Marvel Trading Card Game, Hotel Dusk: Room 215, Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja, Inuyasha: Secret of the Divine Jewel, Lunar Knights.

Wii EXCLUSIVE!
MARIO PARTY 8, Wii PLAY
NINTENDO POWER
READY TO 'WARE?

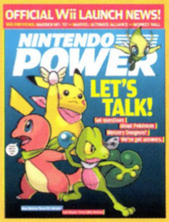
FEBRUARY 2007, VOLUME 212
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Meta Knight), Did I Just See That (WarioWare: Smooth Moves), Diddy Diddy Bang Bang (Diddy Kong Racing DS), Ordeal or No Deal (Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), Host Your Own Wii Sports Challenge, A Climax in Crystal (FINAL FANTASY III), Return to the Throne (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones), The Finest Fantasy (FINAL FANTASY VI Advance), Planet Nintendo (Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection), Into the Blue (Lost in Blue 2), Fire in the Sky (Heatseeker), Room Service (Hotel Dusk: Room 215), Custom Robo Arena, Konami Classic Series: Arcade Hits, Lunar Knights, Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords, Trioncube, Wario: Master of Disguise, Wii Play

NINTENDO POWER
We dream of ZELDA

JANUARY 2007, VOLUME 211
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Pikachu), All the Right Moves (WarioWare: Smooth Moves), 31 Reasons Why Wii Love the Virtual Console, Living the Hy Life (Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess), Reflections on Zelda (Eiji Aonuma interview), Five-Star Truck Test (Excite Truck), Birth of a Hedgehog (Sonic), The Path of Ruin (Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin), A Full Belly (Kirby: Squeak Squad), Court of Appeal (Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All), 10 Ways to Enjoy Your Island Getaway (Yoshi's Island DS), NP's Holiday Travel Guide (DS Travel tips), Hotel Dusk: Room 215, Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007, *Star Wars*: Lethal Alliance, Inuyasha: Secret of the Divine Jewel, Meteos: Disney Magic, Super Swing Golf, Spectrobes, Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja

Wii
NINTENDO POWER
HERE WE GO!
23-PAGE Wii LAUNCH GUIDE
DS SPOTLIGHT

DECEMBER 2006, VOLUME 210
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Wario), Play is the thing (Wii), Stickin' it to the Mana (Children of Mana), Baby Boom! (Yoshi's Island DS), Ready to Rock (Elite Beat Agents), Magical Mystery Tour (Magical Starsign), The Stuff of Legends (Zelda History), Stay in the Loop (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon), Spot Check (Nintendogs: Dalmatian), Harvest Moon Wii, Metroid Prime 3 Corruption, Fullmetal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy, Sonic and the Secret Rings, Super Mario Galaxy, Rayman Raving Rabbids, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justtice for All, Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin, Kirby: Squeak Squad, Bomberman Land Touch!, Top Gear: Downforce, Polarium Advance, Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop 2, Digimon World DS, Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2


OFFICIAL Wii LAUNCH NEWS!
NINTENDO POWER
LET'S TALK!

NOVEMBER 2006, VOLUME 209
Smash Files (Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Kirby), Unravel the Mystery (Pokémon Mystery Dungeon), Touch Football (Madden NFL 07), Going Bananas (Super Monkey Ball Banana Blitz), Heroes in Your Hands (Marvel: Ultimate Alliance), Role-Playing Party (DS RPG), Art of the Deal (Baten Kaitos Origins), The Stuff of Legends (Zelda History), Out Wit... Out Shoot... Out Fox (Star Fox Command), Yoshi's Island 2, Sonic The Hedgehog Genesis, Elebits, Monster 4x4 World Circuit, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, Far Cry Vengeance, Avatar: The Last Air Bender, Rayman Raving Rabbids, Barnyard, The Sims 2 Pets, Justice League Heroes and Justice League Heroes: The Flash, Charlotte's Web, Touch Detective, Gunpey DS, Tomb Raider: Legend

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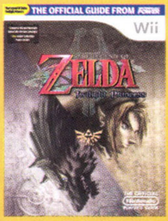
OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES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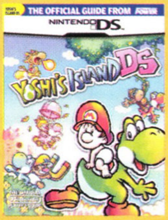
ZELDA
Twilight Princess

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA:
TWILIGHT PRINCESS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YOSHI'S ISLAND DS

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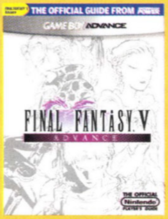
Pokémon RANGER

POKéMON RANGER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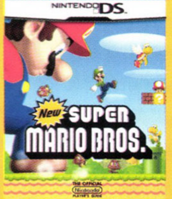
GAME BOY ADVANCE
FINAL FANTASY V ADVANCE

FINAL FANTASY V ADVANCE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NINTENDO DS
New SUPER MARIO BROS.

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PIKMIN 2
- POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

NINTENDO DS AND GAME BOY ADVANCE

- ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD
- PUPS: THE OFFICIAL NINTENDOGS COMPANION (DS)
- FINAL FANTASY I & II: DAWN OF SOULS (GBA)
- FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES (GBA)
- FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME (DS)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID PRIME HUNTERS
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)
- POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON: BLUE/RED RESCUE TEAM

Nintendo Power issues are available individually. Features in each issue are listed above. Use the Back Issue/Player's Guide Order Form in this issue to order past Nintendo Power issues and Player's Guides, call 1-800-255-3700 to order by phone, or visit store.nintendo.com to order online with VISA or MasterCard. Offer valid while supplies last! Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery. Prices include shipping and handling. Prices subject to change without notice.

Enjoying your Wii?

Here are a few reminders:

Remember: Wear the wrist strap when using the Wii Remote. Make sure all players use the wrist strap and that the strap lock is correctly tightened. When sharing the Wii Remote between multiple players, make sure each person using the remote properly uses the wrist strap.

Remember: Don't let go of the Wii Remote during game play. Simply release the button on the remote. Hold the remote securely and avoid excessive motion during game play. If your hands become moist, stop and dry your hands.

Remember: Allow adequate room around you during game play. Stay at least three (3) feet away from the television. As you move around during game play, make sure objects and other people are out of your range of movement or arm motion to prevent damage or injury.

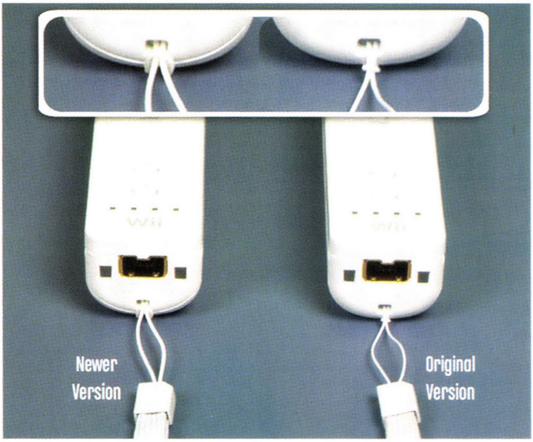
WRIST STRAP REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

For more information on Wii safety, please visit www.nintendo.com/consumer/wiisafety.jsp

Nintendo has received some reports that when consumers swing the Wii Remote with the original version of the wrist-strap using excessive force and accidentally let go, the cord connecting the controller to the wrist strap can break, potentially causing the Wii Remote to strike bystanders or objects.

Nintendo is offering to replace the original version of the wrist straps for the Wii Remote with a newer version for free. The cords on the original wrist straps are 0.6 mm in diameter, and the cords on the replacement straps is a minimum of 1.0mm. Please check the wrist strap on your Wii Remote to see if you have the original or new version (see picture at right). Wii video game systems purchased after December 11, 2006 should have the new 1.0 mm cord. Individually sold Wii Remotes purchased after December 18, 2006 should also have the 1.0mm cord.

For more information on obtaining replacement wrist straps, please call (800) 859-4519 or visit www.nintendo.com/consumer/strapreplace.jsp



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INDOOR ADVENTURE

As April showers make outdoor activity unpleasant, we'll be inside enjoying a trio of handheld adventures new to the archives. FINAL FANTASY Advance (9.5), the GBA translation of FINAL FANTASY III for the SNES, is an unmatched RPG classic. Hotel Dusk: Room 215 (8.0) for DS unfolds like a great detective novel and Lunar Knights (8.0) offers action and RPG elements with a vampire-hunting storyline. If the weather lets up, we'll venture out into the world with our epics in tow.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Barnyard	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
Call of Duty 3	6.5	Activision	211	T
Cars	N/A	THQ	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	7.0	Buena Vista	212	E10+
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	7.0	Atari	211	T
Elebits	7.5	Konami	212	E
Excite Truck	8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Far Cry: Vengeance	4.0	Ubisoft	212	M
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
GT Pro Series	5.0	Ubisoft	211	E
Happy Feet	4.5	Midway	211	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	Sierra	212	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	211	T
Madden NFL 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	8.0	Activision	211	T
Metal Slug Anthology	8.0	SNK Playmore USA	211	T
Monster 4x4: World Circuit	6.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Need for Speed: Carbon	6.0	Electronic Arts	212	E10+
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E10+
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	211	E10+
Rapala Tournament Fishing	N/A	Activision	212	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Red Steel	8.0	Ubisoft	211	T
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	7.0	THQ	211	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Super Swing Golf	7.5	Tecmo	212	E
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	6.0	Ubisoft	211	M
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	212	E10+
Trauma Center: Second Opinion	8.5	Atlus	211	T
WarioWare: Smooth Moves	9.0	Nintendo	212	E
Wii Play	7.0	Nintendo	213	E
Wii Sports	8.0, 8.5	Nintendo	211	E
World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions	N/A	Activision	212	T

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
The Ant Bully	5.0	Midway	208	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	7.0	THQ	210	E
The Barnyard	6.0	THQ	207	E10+
Baten Kaitos Origins	8.0	Nintendo	209	T
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	211	E10+
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
FIFA 07	8.0	Electronic Arts	210	E
FIFA Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Flushed Away	6.5	D3PA	210	E
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	6.5	Midway	210	E10+
Happy Feet	N/A	Midway	211	E
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	9.0,9.5	Natsume	203	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	Vivendi	203	E10+
Kao the Kangaroo: Round 2	2.5	Atari	203	E
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	5.5	Sierra	209	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	212	T
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	7.5	LucasArts	209	E10+
Madden NFL 07	9.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Major League Baseball 2K6	7.0, 6.5,6.0	2K Sports	205	E
Monster House	6.5	THQ	207	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	T
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	7.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	T
Need For Speed: Carbon	7.5	Electronic Arts	211	E10+
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Odama	8.5	Nintendo	203	E10+
One Piece: Grand Adventure	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	T
One Piece: Pirates' Carnival	5.5	Namco Bandai	209	E
Open Season	8.0	Ubisoft	209	E10+
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E10+
Pac-Man World Rally	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	E
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	204	E10+
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	6.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic Riders	8.0	Sega	203	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	8.5	THQ	210	E
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	5.5	Nintendo	208	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	4.5	Ubisoft	210	M
Tomb Raider: Legend	7.5	Eidos	211	T
X-Men: The Official Game	6.5	Activision	205	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.0	Electronic Arts	204	E
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	4.5	THQ	208	T
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	6.5	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	T
• Bomberman Land Touch!	7.0	Atlus	211	E
Brain Boost: Beta Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Brain Boost: Gamma Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Break 'Em All	7.0	D3PA	206	E
Bubble Bobble Revolution	6.0	Codemasters	208	E
Cars	5.5	THQ	206	E
Cartoon Network Racing	N/A	The Game Factory	213	E
• Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	9.0	Konami	211	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Charlotte's Web	6.0	Sega	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	6.5	Buena Vista	210	E
Children of Mana	6.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
• Clubhouse Games	7.0	Nintendo	209	E
• Contact	6.5	Atlus	209	E10+
Cooking Mama	7.0	Majesco	209	E
Crash Boom Bang!	4.0	Sierra	209	E
Deep Labyrinth	6.0	Atlus	208	E10+
Diddy Kong Racing DS	7.5	Nintendo	213	E
• Digimon World DS	N/A	Namco Bandai	212	E
Dino Master	5.5	Majesco	205	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Attack of the Dark Dragon	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Dragon quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	9.0	Square Enix	208	E
Elite Beat Agents	9.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Nintendo	211	T
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
FIFA Street 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
• Final Fantasy III	8.0	Square Enix	211	E10+
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	5.0	THQ	202	E
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+
Full Metal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy	7.0	Destineer	212	T
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	7.0	Majesco	204	T
Gunpey DS	6.5	Namco BAndai	210	E
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Harvest Moon DS	6.0	Natsume	208	E
Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp	4.5	D3PA	206	E10+
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	8.0	Nintendo	213	T
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel	6.0	Namco Bandai	213	E10+

REVIEWER NOTES

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

I like *Star Wars* as much as the next guy (that was my bantha in V204), but that hasn't blinded me to the fact that, from a gameplay perspective, Lego *Star Wars* II is little more than competent. The combat is way too simple, and the lack of any peril—you have infinite lives—turns the game into a snoozefest. Kicking fools with Lando Calrissian is cool and all, but I require more from my games. —Chris H.

>PHOENIX WRIGHT: ACE ATTORNEY JUSTICE FOR ALL

Though it's heavy on text, Justice for All weaves a web of intrigue that makes me hang onto every word. It's quirky, smart, and tense. And I have no objections to that.

—George S.

MEGA MAN ZX

As much as I love disagreeing with the other Chris, I have to admit that Mega Man ZX really is a great game. Metroid-esque level design and a substantial assortment of weapons accompany the classic Mega Man difficulty nicely. I would have liked to see the touch screen used more efficiently—swapping between the various special suits would have been a much easier task via on-screen buttons, but that's just a minor complaint in an otherwise solid effort. —Chris S.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	[illegible]	[illegible]
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	6.5	Atlus	213	E10+
Justic League Heroes	3.0	Warner Bros.Interactive	210	E10+
Kirby: Squeak Squad	7.5	Nintendo	212	E
• Konductra	N/A	0~3	208	E
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	4.5	LucasArts	209	E
• LostMagic	8.0, 7.0	Ubisoft	204	E
Lunar Knights	8.0	Konami	213	E10+
Madden NFL 07	7.5	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	N/A	Namco Bandai	210	E10+
Magical Starsign	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Magnetica	8.0	Nintendo	205	E
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
• Mario Vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
Marvel Trading Card Game	4.0	Konami	213	T
MechAssault: Phantom War	8.0	Majesco	209	T
Mega Man ZX	8.5	Capcom	208	E
• Metroid Prime Hunters	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	203	T
Micro Machines V4	N/A	Codemasters	211	E
Mini RC Rally	N/A	Summitsoft	204	E
Monster Bomber	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Monster House	5.5	THQ	207	E
My Frogger: Toy Trials	N/A	Konami	211	E
Nacho Libre	7.0	Majesco	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
New Super Mario Bros.	9.5,9.5,9.5,9.5	Nintendo	205	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
• Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	9.0	Capcom	212	T
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	6.0	Buena Vista	206	T
Point Blank DS	6.0	Namco Bandai	206	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Pokémon Ranger	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Pokémon Trozei	8.5	Nintendo	202	E
Rafa Nadal Tennis	N/A	Codemasters	213	E
Rainbow Islands Revolution	4.5	Codemasters	208	E
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	8.5	Capcom	202	M
Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who?	6.5	THQ	210	E
The Sims 2 Pets	5.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	6.0	Activision	212	E10+
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
• Star Fox Command	9.5	Nintendo	208	E10+
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	5.5	Bethesda	210	E
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	7.0	Ubisoft	212	E10+
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Super Black Bass Fishing	4.5	Majesco	204	E
Super Princess Peach	7.5	Nintendo	202	E
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	6.0	Konami	203	E
• Tenchu: Dark Secret	5.0	Nintendo	208	T
• Tetris DS	9.5	Nintendo	203	E
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	N/A	Buena Vista	210	E
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2	N/A	Namco Bandai	211	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	4.5	Eidos	210	T
• Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Top Gun	4.0	Mastiff	202	E10+
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Touch Detective	6.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Trioncube	5.5	Namco Bandai	213	E
Winning Eleven Pro Evelution Soccer 2007	6.5	Konami	213	E
Worms: Open Warfare	7.0	THQ	202	E10+
X-Men: The Official Game	7.0	Activision	205	E10+
Xiaolin Showdown	5.0	Konami	212	E
Yoshi's Island DS	8.0	Nintendo	211	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! Spirit Caller	N/A	Konami	213	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	N/A	THQ	208	E10+
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	208	E
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	210	E
Babar to the Rescue	N/A	THe Game Factory	206	E
Backyard Baseball 2007	3.5	Atari	204	E
Backyard Basketball 2007	N/A	Atari	209	E
The Barnyard	6.5	THQ	207	E
Battle B-Daman	6.5	Atlus	207	E
Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!	6.5	Atlus	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	N/A	D3PA	204	E
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	7.5	Capcom	209	T
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance/ Aria of Sorrow Double Pack	9.0	Konami	202	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	204	E
The Cheetah Girls	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Rise of the Huntsclan	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E10+
Dr. Sudoku	6.0	Mastiff	203	E
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure	7.0	Atari	203	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Nintendo	211	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
Final Fantasy V Advance	8.5	Nintendo	210	E
Final Fantasy VI Advance	9.5	Nintendo	213	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	N/A	Crave Entertainment	213	E
Games Explosion!	4.0	THQ	208	E
Garfield and His Nine Lives	5.0	The Game Factory	204	E
Ghost Rider	N/A	2K Games	213	T
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
Justic League Heroes: The Flash	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	N/A	LucasArts	209	E
Let's Ride! Dreamer	N/A	THQ	203	E
Madden NFL 07	7.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mazes of Fate	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	213	T
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gregar & Cybeast Falzar	7.5	Capcom	206	E
Miss Spider's Harvest Time Hop & Fly	N/A	The Game Factory	206	E
Monster House	5.0	THQ	207	E
Naruto: Ninja Council	4.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	E10+
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	5.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	3.5	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Paws & Claws Resort	N/A	THQ	203	E
Phil of the Future	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	7.5	Buena Vista	206	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Polarium Advance	N/A	Atlus	212	E
The Santa Clause 3	N/A	Buena Vista	209	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	6.0	Sega	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Sudoku Fever	4.0	Global Star	202	E
Sudoku Mania	N/A	UFO Interactive	206	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	8.0	Atlus	207	E10+
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	8.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	6.5	Atlus	207	T
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	7.0	Atlus	211	T
Tales of Phantasia	8.5	Nintendo	202	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Double Pack	N/A	Konami	206	E
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
The Tower SP	7.0	Sega	203	E
The Wild	N/A	Buena Vista	204	E
X-Men: The Official Game	3.5	Activision	205	E10+
Yggdra Union	7.5	Atlus	211	T
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	6.0	Konami	204	E

SUPERMAN RETURNS

Electronic Arts wouldn't provide us with a copy of Superman Returns in time to give it a review before the game hit store shelves, and now we know why. This DS disaster continues the long tradition of horrific Superman video games with unfathomably bad design choices (boss battles play out as rhythm minigames), long load times (!), and such scintillating missions as scouring Metropolis for the right phone booth. It may actually be as terrible as Superman 64. We're staying far, far away. —Steve T.

>ELEBITS

Zapping your way through the playfully destructive, disturbingly suburban environments of Elebits is fun, strange, and surprisingly addictive. Think Half-Life 2 meets Katamari Damacy.

—Andy M.

RED STEEL

Red Steel had seemingly everything going for it but time—time to get the game right before unleashing it on the public. I'm hard-wired to like any yakuza-themed game, but I felt a little cheated by Ubisoft's PG-13 approach to the material and the game's hinky controls. I'm sure that there is a fun, intuitive way to simulate sword battles using the Wii remote, but Red Steel didn't make it happen for me.

—Drew W.

MUSIC

Double Dose of 8-Bit Rock

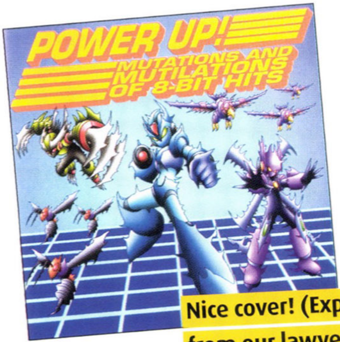
Though technologically outdated, 8-bit gaming systems such as the Nintendo Entertainment System and the original Game Boy have lived on by inspiring countless musical efforts. Two recent CD releases—*Power Up!* and *8-Bit Operators*—show the range of influence these beloved game systems have had on modern-day music.

8-Bit
operators
The Music Of Kraftwerk
On Vintage 8-Bit Video Game Systems

8-Bit Operators

The Music of Kraftwerk Performed on Vintage Video Game Systems

For some musicians, the 8-bit-influence goes far beyond just covering video-game songs. Some enthusiasts take their low-tech love to the next level by using the old technology to create new music. How they go about it is an involved process that we won't try to explain here, but what's relevant is that they're using systems like the NES, the Game Boy, and the Commodore 64 as tools to sequence their music. The *8-Bit Operators* collection includes some of the finest 8-bit musicians in the world (such as Nullsleep, Bubblyfish, and Bit Shifter) covering songs by electronic-music icons Kraftwerk. For those unfamiliar with this style of music, 8-Bit Operators will serve as a great introduction into a fascinating underground music scene.


POWER UP!
MUTATIONS AND MUTILATIONS OF 8-BIT HITS

Nice cover! (Expect a letter from our lawyers very soon.)

Power Up!

Mutations and Mutilations of 8-Bit Hits

If you've been reading Nintendo Power for a while, then you're probably aware of the NES cover-band craze. The Minibosses and The Advantage are a couple of our favorites, though plenty of other acts are making names for themselves. Although *Power Up!* is a compilation of NES song covers, it stands apart from the usual crop by enlisting bands that don't normally cover NES songs. This makes for a very interesting collection as each of the 13 bands has a wildly different take on how to approach NES music. You'll find anything from a straight-up metal rendition of River City Ransom's boss-battle music to a beautiful piano medley inspired by Marble Madness. It's quite an assemblage of musicians, featuring bands with members of The Advantage and Cinemechanica. If you're a fan of NES music, *Power Up!* is definitely worth checking out. —Andy M.

FASHION

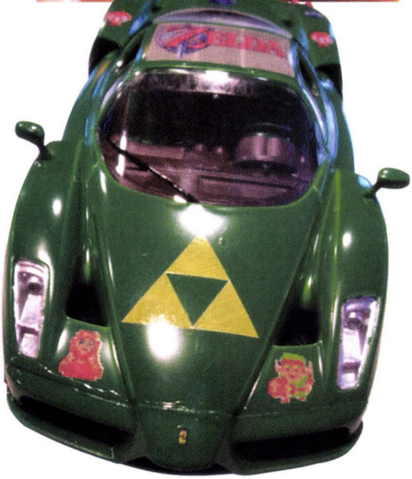
Knittin' It Old School

Fashion designer Shica T. makes all sorts of cute clothing items—she tells us she even designed a dress for this year's Grammys! But Shica's true love is old-school gaming, made clear by her awesome winterwear.
Visit www.urbanprincess.etsy.com to see more of Shica's nice needlework.
—Andy M.

ART

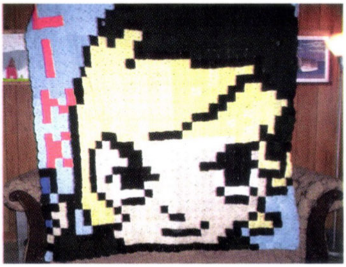
Crafty Cuts

Loyal NP reader Sam L. sent us a few Nintendo-related art projects that he recently completed. He found the papercraft character designs on the Web (just search "Nintendo papercraft" to find various sites offering patterns). The Zelda-themed car-detailing is a combination of stickers and hand-painted design. Nice work! —Chris S.



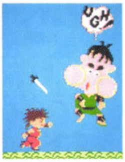
A Link to the Craft

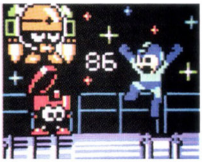
11-year-old subscriber Taylor W. received this afghan for Christmas, made with love by his mother. Lots of love, in fact. The afghan consists of 1024 squares crocheted together, each square representing one pixel. Nice work, mom! —Andy M.



He Is 8-Bit

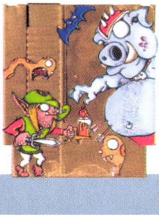
Artist and Nintendo fan Chris O. (who also goes by the moniker 8-Bit Artist) sent us some of his work, in which he painstakingly re-creates NES game scenes pixel-by-pixel. Chris works mostly in paint on canvas, and has a vast library of work to show for it. —Andy M.

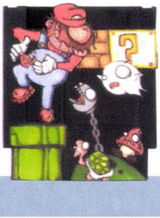


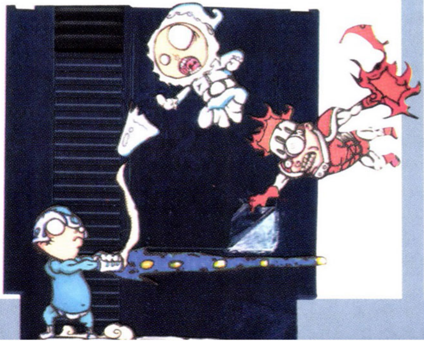


Cartridge Art

Artist Brian R. Ohio was kind enough to send us some of his unique artwork, in which he uses old NES cartridges as canvas. We think Brian's style would lend itself well to the annual I Am 8-Bit exhibit in LA. —Andy M.





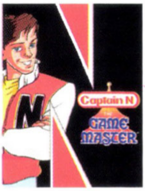


COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Plug in and geek out with the rest of the Nintendo community.

CAPTAIN N ON DVD
Feb. 27, 2007

Whether you love it, hate it, or are drawn to it out of morbid curiosity, you can now own the first two seasons of the cult cartoon on DVD.



SIX FLAGS HEARTS Wii
April-October, 2007

If you're planning on visiting a Six Flags park this summer, keep an eye out for Wii as you're running from roller coaster to roller coaster. A partnership between Nintendo and Six Flags will place playable Wii systems at the following locations:

Six Flags Over Georgia
Atlanta, GA

Six Flags Great America
Chicago, IL

Six Flags Over Texas
Arlington, TX

Six Flags Magic Mountain
Los Angeles, CA

Six Flags Fiesta Texas
San Antonio, TX

Six Flags Great Adventure
Jackson, NJ

Six Flags New England
Springfield, MA

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom
Vallejo, CA

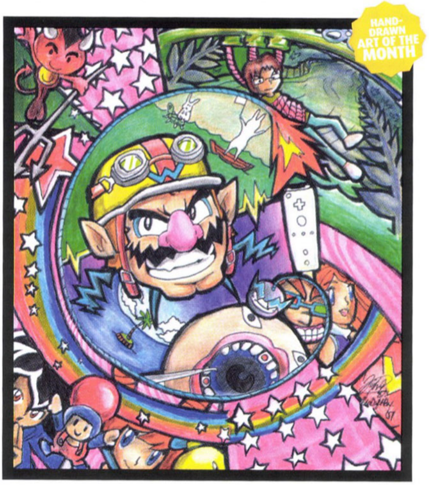
Six Flags St. Louis
St. Louis, MO

Six Flags America
Baltimore, MD/Wash. D.C.

ART OF THE MONTH

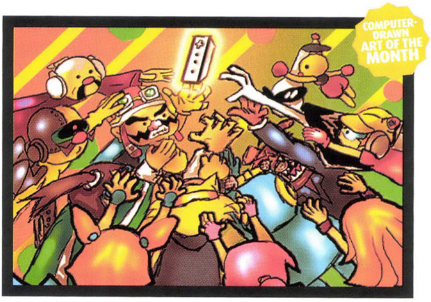
That's *Art*, No *F*

This month we have a lot to be thankful for in our art-of-the-month contest. Not only did we get two awesome, trippy character montages, but our artists took the high road and resisted the temptation to depict flatulence jokes.


HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
NEODAFT

SUBJECT:
WARIOWARE: SMOOTH MOVES


COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
CRYSTALFAIRY12

SUBJECT:
WARIOWARE: SMOOTH MOVES

Looking to submit art for the first time and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

NSider Reviews

We encourage everyone to submit reviews for games, but remember to follow the rules: keep them under 300 words, and check your spelling!

NSider Review of the Month

Luneth
Arc
Refia

FINAL FANTASY III

reviewed by Hey . . . It's Brian!

Originally released only in Japan for the NES nearly 15 years ago, Final Fantasy III has been remade for the Nintendo DS in North America in full 3-D, with an enhanced battle system and improved dialogue.

The story tells of four young adventurers whom destiny chooses to confront malevolent forces that threaten the balance of good and evil—and ultimately, the entire planet.

FFIII is a pretty typical Final Fantasy game, complete with unique job classes, a system in which your party members can assume one of 23 identities, each with unique strengths. And while the plot may sound [clichéd], it is important to remember this game's age and place in history. It is unreasonable to think that a game from 1990 can have a story as complex as today's RPGs, but players may still become frustrated with the predictable twists and turns.

Graphically, the game is stunning. The player is able to explore FFIII's villages, dungeons and caverns in a new 3-D universe. The soundtrack, meanwhile, is virtually identical to the NES version, with familiar Final Fantasy tunes sprinkled throughout the game.

One thing that can be said about FFIII is that it is tough. Leveling up will be inevitable, and lots of side quests for secret summons and the bonus job class make this game no easier.

In a nutshell, Final Fantasy III is a very challenging RPG and easily one of the best for the DS. Though the characters are shallow and the story insipid, the game is masterfully re-done for a brand-new console and a brand-new generation of gamers.

Let your voice be heard!

If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an Nsider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

GOT THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING THAT BELONGS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTION? DROP US A LINE AT COMMUNITY@NINTENDOPOWER.COM.

FOOD

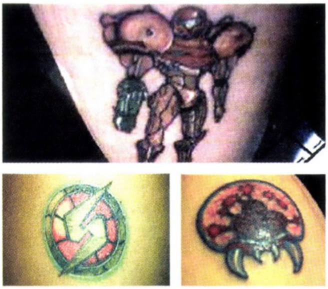
Mario Party 8

Arielle B. celebrated her eighth birthday with the Super Mario Bros. and special guests thanks to a Mushroom Kingdom-themed cake decorated by her parents, Kim and Brian. To cap off the celebration, partygoers enjoyed a round of Mario Kart: Double Dash. The fact that she won't have a driver's license for another eight years didn't stop Arielle from racing circles around the competition. —George S.

TATTOOS

Mad for Metroid

Jose S. wears his love for all things Metroid under his sleave, and just about anywhere else there's room. His tattoos of Samus Aran's logo, Samus in her power suit, and a Metroid are strictly old-school. —George S.



WEBSITES

Video Bonus

Last month we featured a couple of Nintendo-related YouTube finds that we thought were worth your time. Here's another, in which four students from Carnegie Mellon University perform a hilarious skit as part of a school assignment. The skit makes clever references that fans of classic Nintendo games will appreciate, such as the infamous "I Am Error" screen from Zelda II. —Andy M.

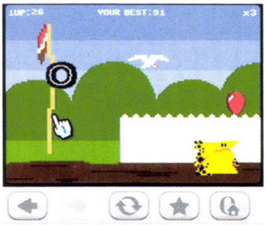
www.youtube.com

Search "nintendo testers wanted" to find this video on YouTube.

Game Point

It looks like the folks at wiicade.com aren't the only ones making web games for use with the Wii remote. Videlectrix, the makers of Flash games for the fantastic website homestarrunner.com, have started their own collection. The content is suitable for all ages, and the humor is . . . well, *unique*. —Chris S.

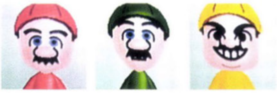
http://www.videlectrix.com/vii/



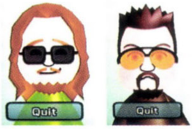
CHANNELS

Mad about Mii

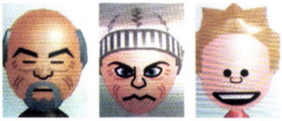
Based on the response to last month's Mii Spree article, we learned two things about our readers: one, they're really good at making Miis; and two, they're obsessed with Michael Jackson. (We got about 30 renditions of the King of Pop. What gives?) Anyway, keep the Miis coming—we'd like to make reader-featured Miis a monthly affair. Send a photo of your favorite Mii to community@nintendopower.com (unless it happens to be Michael Jackson). —Andy M.



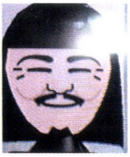
Mario, Luigi, and Wario, by Keith K.



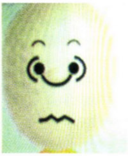
The Dude and Walter from *The Big Lebowski*, by Geoff A.



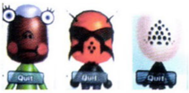
Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*, Mick from *Rocky*, and Calvin from *Calvin and Hobbes* by Kevin A.



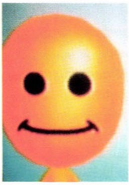
V from *V for Vendetta*, by Holly R.



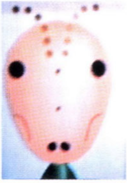
Charlie Brown, by Scott H.



Frog Face, Insect Face, and Dot Face, by Emily K.



Smiley, by Otto M.



Buzz, by Jack W.

NEXT MONTH

A DS-driven Pokémon adventure and new chapters in other established series dominate the May issue.

PEARL JAM

Expect more pearls of wisdom as we continue our Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl coverage, focusing on connectivity and the Battle Tower.

ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM

What could be more fun than creating your own robot and taking it into battle? We review Custom Robo Arena for the DS.

IT LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER

Super Paper Mario for Wii adds a 3-D twist to the action-RPG series. We page through the game in a comprehensive feature.

CONSOLE CLASSICS

The Virtual Console is playing host to some of the all-time greats, including some of the best games in the Legend of Zelda series. Our strategy coverage reveals all.

CONTACTS

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(1-800-422-4281 TDD)
Note: We are unable to answer gameplay questions on this line. 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, every day. French- and Spanish-speaking representatives are available.

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Get complete game walk-throughs on the most popular games for Nintendo systems. This call may be long-distance, so be sure to get permission from whoever pays the phone bill before you call. For a complete list of games available on the power line, check out:
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ESRB GAME RATING INFORMATION
To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

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Everyone
Everyone (10+)
Teen (13+)
Mature (17+)
Adult (18+)
Rating Pending

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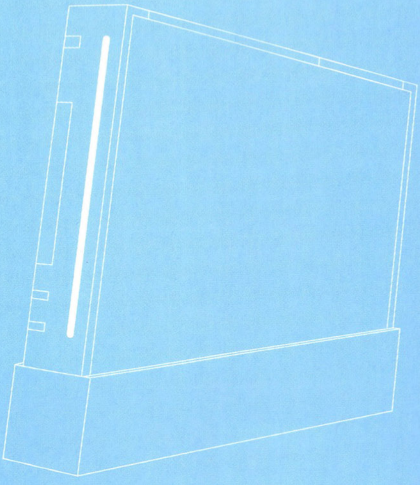

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** Some restrictions may apply.
‡ For information about your current Wii Console warranty, please refer to the Wii Operations Manual.

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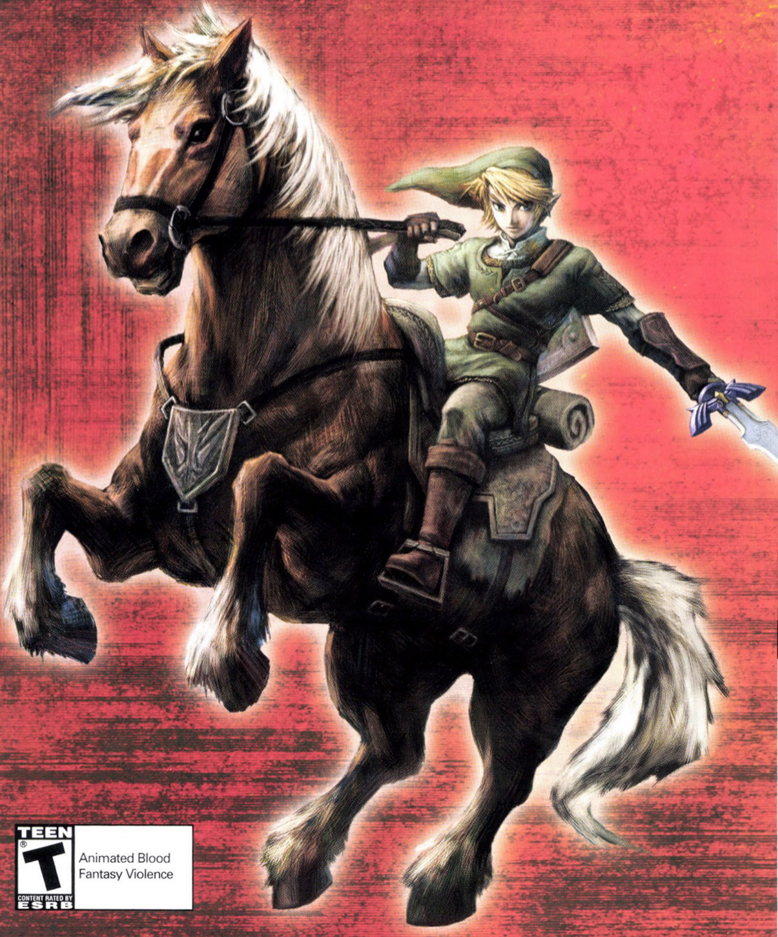

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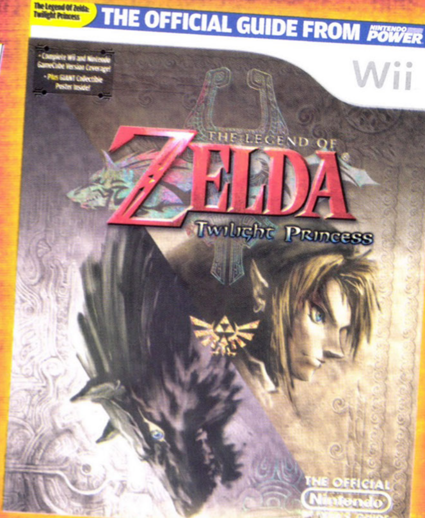
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NINTENDO DS™

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